MY LIFE – ITS LEGACY AND MESSAGE

(Hamārī Vasīyat aur Virāsat)

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FOREWORD

The life-play of truly epoch-changing personages (the sages, saints, seers and incarnations) does not appear, on a mere surface look, any different from ordinary persons. Even persons living closest to them, who are not granted the inner vision, mistake them as common human beings. Only the few endowed with intuitive knowledge are revealed the true divine identity and mission of the 'appearance' of such spiritually awakened souls. Such have been the wonderful performances of even the greatest of the incarnations like *Bhagvān* Ram and *Bhagvān* Krishna. Although they had 'appeared' with all the divine attributes and powers for the fulfilment of the specific aims of their 'descent' in human form, very few of their contemporaries could comprehend the significance of their incarnation.

Could any of the colleagues and playmates of *Bhagvān* Krishna who used to steal buttermilk (*mākhan*) and played with the village girls and boys (*Gopīs* and *Gwāl-bāls*); killed *Pootna* and other *Asurs* sent by Kans; lifted Gowardhan *Parvat* (mountain); played *Rās-līlā* (eternal dance of hide and seek with *Gopīs*); recognise His Divine Identity? For them all he just remained a *Bāl-gopāl*. He left Mathura and shifted to Dwarka as *Raṇchoḍa*, washed the feet of all the invitees in Yudhisthir's *Rājsūya Yagya* and acted just like an ordinary human being. Even as close a friend as Arjun could not comprehend fully His Divinity until he faced the greatest crisis of his life just before the start of the great Armageddon of *Mahābhārat*. It was then that the greatest warrior of the age had to beseech for divine guidance, as a seeker and disciple, from the Divine Teacher, enacting as his Charioteer.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः। पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः॥
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे। शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्॥ २-७॥

With my nature overpowered by weak commiseration, with my mind in confusion about my duty, I supplicate You. Kindly say decidedly what is good for me. I take refuge in You. I am your disciple. So please instruct me.

Bhagvān Krishna has appropriately said in *Bhagvad-Gītā*:

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्॥ ९-११॥

Unaware of my higher state (eminence) as the great Lord of beings fools disregard Me, dwelling in the human form.

Such also has been the life-play of *Gurudev* Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, the Seer, Sage and Prophet of an imminent emergence of the golden era of peace, goodwill, harmony, understanding with a sense of inter-connectedness of all humanity. These few words are being written in the context of the publication of the revised version of *Gurudev's* autobiographical work in Hindi: *Hamārī Vasīyat aur Virāsat* (published in 1986) which had been published in English under the title: "My Will and Heritage" in 1988. Today *Gurudev* is globally acknowledged as a *Brahmarṣi* (the modern Vishwamitra). He has revealed anew the life transforming significance of *Gāyatrī Mahāmantra* and has made it available to all humanity, cutting across the barriers of race, caste, creed and sex. He came into public view in his early childhood and adolescence as a multi-talented person endowed with deep compassion, penetrating intelligence and an intense aspiration for serving the needy– the lowliest and the lost.

Acharyashri was born in an aristocratic, scholarly and devout *brāhmaṇa* family on September 11th, 1911 (*Vikram Saṁvat* 1969, *Aświna Krisṇa Trayodaśī*) in village Anwalkheda, Agra District, Uttar Pradesh, India. In spite of repeated requests and urgings from his closest disciples and friends he did not write anything about his inner life and attainments till 1984. The writer of these lines was at that time actively associated with *Gurudev* in his literary pursuits, during his *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā*. It was in the June 1984 issue of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* that *Gurudev* gave some autobiographical glimpses of his spiritual unfoldment. After the publication of this issue of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti, Gurudev* was flooded with irresistible appeals from all quarters to throw more light on his *sādhanā* which had culminated in his evolution as a *Yug Riṣi* (the sage-saint of the age). In response to these prayers and appeals, another special issue of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* was

published in April 1985, in which *Gurudev* wrote about the appearance of his own *Gurudev* (Divine Master) who lived in his astral form; his three previous births in the fifteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries; his pilgrimages to the *Himālayas* and his meetings there with his *Gurudev* and other *Riṣis* living in their astral forms and the *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā* that he had undertaken in 1984 to make himself a super-conductive conduit for the flow of all-conquering Divine energy for the banishment of Evil from the human psyche on a global scale and thus facilitate the ushering in of the fast emerging New Era of Peace, Goodwill, Harmony and Love on Earth, notwithstanding the forebodings of the prophets of doom.

These two issues of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* formed the basis of *Gurudev's* most important work– *Hamārī Vasīyat aur Virāsat*, which has a unique place in his writings and has gone through a number of editions so far. The present volume – *My Life - Its Legacy and Message* is a thoroughly revised, edited and expanded version of *My Will and Heritage*, with appropriate additions of quotations and photographs. The earlier editions contained some errors and omissions as also some defects as regards printing and get-up.

It is a saga of the blossoming forth of an exceptionally evolved soul into an epoch-changing *Riṣi* – a pioneering Seer-Sage of the impending era of Love, Light and Life Divine on Earth. The author has purposely kept silent about most of the deeply occult and mystic aspects of his inner pilgrimage of the soul, as the time was not ripe for their revelation. Still, any attentive, perceptive and open-minded reader endowed with true faith will find enough material here which can serve as a means to strengthen his faith and guide him on the path of self-exploration, self-awareness and self-transcendence. The power of inspiration with which this volume is suffused lies in the fact that here there is no dichotomy between precept and practice. The *Yug Riṣi* has himself trodden the path of *sādhanā*, *upāsanā* and *arādhanā* propounded by him herein.

The *Brahmavarchas Research Institute* of this *Mission* has undertaken the stupendous task of publishing all the writings *(Samagra Vāngmaya)* of *Gurudev* in 108 volumes. Some of these books have

already been published. The first volume in this series is entirely devoted to the lives, work and mission of the *Riṣi* couple, *Gurudev* and *Vandanīyā Mātājī*, which is likely to be available by the end of this year.

The *Gāyatrī Parivār Mission* is trying to publish this great work of *Gurudev* (*Hamārī Vasīyat aur Virāsat*) in as many languages of India and the world as possible. As *Bhagvad-Gītā*, in original, is the authentic teaching of Shri Krishna, and not the numerous commentaries written thereon over the centuries, with their different interpretations; *Hamārī Vasīyat aur Virāsat* is the only authentic and authoritative autobiographical account written by *Gurudev* about himself; notwithstanding the various treatises and reminiscences written by *parijans* and scholars about his life and work.

It is our hope and prayer that this revised volume will provide to its readers unambiguous guidelines, deep inspiration and a firm faith to start on their own inner pilgrimage of soul-search and thus fulfil the true purpose of human life. May be, some of them endowed with true faith and clear vision will find the *Riṣi's* Living Presence guiding and encouraging them in their spiritual pursuits.

Gāyatrī Jayantī
Pranav Pandya
Samvat 2053
(28th May, 1996)

CHAPTER 1

THE NEED FOR AN IN-DEPTH SURVEY OF MY PRESENT LIFE SOJOURN

There is always an inquisitiveness to know about the lives of persons who have made a mark in their specific fields of action and endeavour. It not only satisfies our curiosity but offers clues and guidelines towards the resolution of the problems of life. Be that as it may, biographical narrations are always entertaining, engaging and valuable in imparting insights and inspirations.

Friends have often been making queries about my life but I have generally put off answering such queries because outwardly visible events of my life are there for all to see as an open book. People have a propensity for magic and miracles. Numerous persons who have come in close contact with me as serious spiritual aspirants have been benefited by the divine grace working through me and they consider me a *siddha puruṣa* (an enlightened soul). They are keen to know all about those secrets which have made my life a benediction and a blessing. In fact, the secrets will remain a secret during my lifetime as I have imposed a ban on their disclosure. If anybody wants to really know about my life story he should, at first, understand its underlying philosophy. Those searching for something truly mystical and out of the ordinary will probably get a new direction from my way of life.

Although, there has been nothing ostensibly magical in this life, there is much that is substantial, which can help in understanding the real nature of spirituality (Science of the Spirit) and its definitively positive results. Being ignorant of its real nature, people are misled, they get disappointed, lose faith and regard spirituality as mere pretension or sham. Majority of the people these days, consists of those covert atheists who at one time had turned to formalistic religion enthusiastically but did nothing beyond following some mechanical rituals. Later, joy and zeal disappeared from these lifeless routines. How could faith be retained when whatever was held forth as culmination of these religious pursuits did not ever materialise?

My life story can act as a lighthouse for genuine seekers of Truth. It is a way of life adopted by a rational and a realistic person and there is nothing obscurantic and pretentious in it. Stigma of failure cannot also be attributed to it. Persons who seriously try to understand that there could be a true path to attain the goal of soul-awakening, who do not fall into the trap of illusion

of short-cuts, would not meet with disappointment and disillusionment. Had such persons read my story, understood the spiritual philosophy underlying it and followed the process of self-growth prescribed therein, it is certain that the number of such misled and confused persons would have been far less than what it is today.

There is another category of persons who are realistic and at the same time are endowed with insight. They wholeheartedly believe in *Riṣi* traditions. They concede the supremacy of spirituality (Science of Spirit) over the physical sciences which deal with working of the apparent phenomena and are inquisitive about its real nature. Every fruit vendor says that her plums are sweet but the truth or otherwise of the claim is determined after actual testing of the fruit.

When righteous people act together towards righteous ends, the result is bound to be good. Thus those who want to understand the nature of spirituality of the *Riṣi* traditions will greatly benefit by the in-depth study of my way of life. The whole of my life of the past sixty-three years has been spent for this very purpose. The results are there for everyone to read like an open book and to be convinced that the right path must have been pursued to get these astoundingly sublime results. Such a sunlit path can be profitably followed by others. It is hoped that those who are drawn towards Self-knowledge and the life-transforming power of spirituality, who want to see its re-effulgence, who want to test theories on the touchstone of the actual proof would find the perusal of these pages (truthfully narrating the process of my own self-growth) rewarding.

There is nothing peculiar or fascinating in my outer life apart from certain turning points which are being published here. There is no scope in it for magic or miracles or for hopping and jumping about by way of fun and frolic. I have been spending my time single-pointedly in a well organised and well planned manner. Therefore, those looking for a march of glittering pageant of stimulating events will be disappointed. However, those interested in the verities and mysteries working beneath the foam and froth of the surface events will get a glimpse of the perennial unbroken tradition of the flow of spirituality and they would be able to understand the underlying causes of success and failure in life. The only reason which causes disappointment in the field of religious worship, which has defamed spirituality and made it ridiculous, is to consider formal rituals as everything and to pay no attention to the inner cleansing and refinement. My outward actions and activities are like those of an ordinary person but they directly

originate from the bedrock of Spirit and release the spiritual splendour and energy (*brahmatejas*) which bestows the capacity to accomplish something worthwhile and of decisive importance for the good of all.

There was no purpose in describing in detail the various events of life, except to satisfy some curiosity. What really mattered were the inner vision and steadfastness of faith which acted as manure and water for nurturing the tiny seed to grow into a mighty tree. In fact, it is the radiant personality of the devotee (*sādhak*) that infuses life in *sādhanā* and mere performance of rituals is nothing but a pastime.

Ram of Tulsi, Hare Krishna of Soor, collective singing of devotional songs by Chaitanya, songs of Meera, Ramakrishna's worship of Mother Kali, did not become radiantly alive for these devotees merely by their ritualistic worship. Innumerable persons act in an absurd and mechanical manner; what they get is nothing but ridicule. When Valmiki changed the pattern of his life, he became illumined even by doing *jap* in an incorrect, reverse manner. Ajamil, Angulimal, Ganika and Amrapali were hardly literate but they had moulded their inner lives in conformity with spiritual ideals.

It is rather a sad irony that people these days mistakenly assume that they have embarked on the path of self-realisation merely by uttering some words, performing certain rituals or making certain offerings to the Deity. They never try to transform their thoughts, character and attitudes in the light of the Indwelling Spirit which is a must for spiritual progress. I have always been cautious not to allow this falsity to enter into my way of *sādhanā*. This path is realistic, practical and easy to be followed by and beneficial to the common mass of humanity. My way of life should be studied keeping this in view.

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CHAPTER 2

THE SUNRISE OF MY LIFE'S FORTUNE

I have completed seventy-eight years of my life in 1989. During this long life-span, I pursued only one aim and that was to investigate how *siddhi* (spiritual awakening) could be attained by *sādhanā*. It occurred to me that just as several scientists devoted their entire lives in doing basic research work and had thus served mankind, it should be seriously examined whether the age-old belief that *sādhanā* leads to *siddhi* is correct or not and that this

experiment should be done not on others but on myself. This idea sprang up within me when I was ten years old and dominated my thoughts till I was fifteen. In the meanwhile, the only thing which is worth mentioning is that my father got my *upnayan* (sacred thread) ceremony performed and I was initiated in *Gāyatrī mantra* by his classmate, *Mahāmanā* Madan Mohan Malviya. I completed my elementary education in the primary school of the village and my father taught me *Sanskrit* grammar on the basis of *Laghu-Koumudī* and *Sidhānta-Koumudī*. I used to accompany my father on his visits to rulers of princely states to deliver religious discourses on *Śrīmad Bhāgvat Purāṇa* and thus I learnt *Bhāgvat* from the beginning to the end.

In the meantime, I was married. My wife was disciplined, industrious, service-minded and she cooperated in all my efforts. In this way fifteen years of life passed.

Morning and evening worship and prayers (*sandhyā-vandana*) formed part of my daily routine. At the time of my initiation, Malviyaji had told me that *Gāyatrī mantra* was *Kāmdhenu* of a *brāhmaṇa* and had enjoined me to at least perform five *malas* of *Gāyatrī jap* (chanting the *mantra* 540 times) regularly; and that it was all the more beneficial if more *japs* could be performed. I kept this direction in mind and followed it regularly and religiously.

It was all of a sudden that God's grace descended on me at the age of fifteen as if it was preplanned and predestined. I got an opportunity to dedicate myself single-pointedly towards the realisation of my childhood dreams. It was the day of *Basant parva*. While I was engrossed in worship in my room during the small hours of the morning (*brahma-muhūrta*) I saw an aura of light. I was stunned, amazed and awestruck. I rubbed my eyes to ascertain whether it was a hallucination or something astral like a ghost or a demon, but it was none of these.

An astral body of a *yogī* emerged in the middle of that aura of light. It was astral in the sense that his figure was visible although it was hanging in the empty space with an envelope of light all around it. I was wondering as to who he was. The apparition said, "I have been linked with you and guiding you during your past several lives. Since your childhood is now over, I have come to impart you the necessary guidance. Probably you have no recollection of your past lives and so you are frightened and amazed. See the events of your past births and remove your doubts". His grace descended on me and I had a feeling of drowsiness. I experienced, for the first time in

my life, what is known as *yog-nidrā*, a stage which is also called *jāgrat samādhi*. While bathing in that state of elevated consciousness, I had a cinematographic view of actual events of my several past births.

I can still vividly recall how a glimpse of that divine personage in the form of waves of light, of whom I am a part and parcel and who appeared in my room of worship when I was fifteen, had immediately aroused a host of questions in my mind. Generally, people wander aimlessly in search of *Sadguru* (spiritual guide) and consider themselves extremely fortunate when they succeed in finding one . But what happened with me was altogether different. I had already been initiated by *Mahāmanā* Madan Mohan Malviyaji in *Gāyatrī mantra* when I was eight years of age and so the question of selecting any other person as *Guru* (spiritual guide) had ended then and there. I had not even imagined of meeting another *Guru*. The miraculous way I was blessed in this manner all of a sudden was a matter of great wonderment for me.

Seekers are always in search of a *Guru* (guide). They consider themselves blessed if they happen to meet one. Often they seek from their *Gurus* worldly boons. Then why had the grace of such an elevated soul been suddenly showered on me? Was it a hallucination or was something inauspicious or calamitous to befall me. Such fears and doubts passed through my mind after I had the first encounter with the great *Guru*.

He did not feel annoyed and could understand my dilemma. It appeared to me by the cheerful demeanour of his face that he appreciated my suspense. Without wasting time, he introduced himself to me and explained the reason for his appearance by reviving the memory of my past births. It is a normal courtesy that if a person visits somebody's house, the latter wants to know about the former's purpose of visit.

The figure in my room of worship, who was enveloped by an aura of light, further said, "Your thinking is correct. Before spending their time and energy divine souls test the persons with whom they want to establish their soul relationship. They do not appear before any Tom, Dick or Harry to fulfil his fancies. No wise and discerning person ever tries to establish deep relationship with a person without considering his worthiness and eligibility. Several persons consider it beneficial to get linked with great and spiritually resplendent personages but they forget that no one likes to waste his energy and capabilities over a worthless person.

"I had been searching through my subtle vision for a fit medium who could

be directly instrumental in promoting universal welfare. This body of mine is not physical. A person having physical body has to be made a medium and used as an instrument for action on the physical realm, which cannot be directly done through an astral body. These are critical times and there are great chances of mankind being grievously harmed and overwhelmed by the forces of darkness. I want to make you a medium to help solve the problems bedevilling humanity. You will get my guidance and cooperation and your shortcomings will be removed. It is for this purpose that I have come to you. Till now, you were engrossed in your normal life and considered yourself as an ordinary man. These days nobody believes any one all of a sudden. Your doubts would not have been properly removed by a mere verbal description of your competence. Therefore, you have been given a vision about past births."

After having projected details of some of my past lives, *Gurudev* indicated how he had lived with me and helped me throughout these past births.

He said, "I shall be helping you now and get all that work done through you which is essential to meet the challenges of the present times. *Yogīs* having only astral bodies cannot establish physical contacts which is possible only by embodied beings and hence the former depend for this purpose on the latter. It is good that you are married. These days, it is less advantageous and rather risky to remain unmarried. In ancient times, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Ganesh, Indra, Soorya all were married. The seven *Riṣis* had their wives, because for proper organisation and administration of *Gurukuls* both the father and the mother are needed. Mother provides food, residence, clothes and affection, while father looks after discipline, teachings, sanctions etc. *Guru* is the disciple's father and *Guru's* wife his mother according to the *Riṣi* traditions. These days indolent and scheming people masquerade themselves as religious teachers and saints and mislead the masses. I am very happy that you are married. There may be some interruption, but in due course you will get as your life companion a person who has lived with you as your life partner in some of your previous lives. She will live with you throughout your life and will play a significant role in your work. You were a householder in two of your past three lives. Do not think that married life will be a hindrance in your work. In fact, it will be helpful in the present circumstances and will be conducive to better results in the task of ushering in of a New Era for humanity."

It was the pre-dawn hour *(brahma muhūrta)* of the auspicious day of *Basant pancamī* and I was busy with my daily routine of worship when I had the

concrete vision of the divine personage enveloped in a column of light and he, on his own, provided answers to all doubts, questions and queries that had been lurking in my mind. I saw my past three lives one after the other from the beginning till the end, which were all for divine work and during which I had been instrumental in playing crucial roles in the regeneration and upliftment of the society and had initiated integrative and inclusive paths of *sādhanā* in tune with the needs of the times, under the guidance of that *Devātmā* who was standing before me. All that had earlier appeared to be strange vanished from my mind and a feeling of deep intimacy, affinity and gratefulness awakened in my rejuvenated and awakened soul. My family, whom I had considered my kith and kin, appeared to be alien and I started regarding this *Devātmā*, who was before me in the form of a column of light, as the soul of my soul. I felt that my past and future were linked with him. I had no other aspiration and nothing to claim as my own but to follow rigorously and faithfully the directions of my master. This is what is called true *surrender*. I surrendered myself at that moment to that divine soul and regarded him not only my guide but equivalent to Divinity Itself. This relationship has been maintained for the past sixty-three years and I have been forging ahead wholeheartedly and unhesitatingly on the path indicated by him. No questions or doubts have ever arisen in my mind as to my capability to accomplish his will or what results my efforts will bear.

That day I learnt one more lesson: that the grace of divine souls is granted only for public good, for the growth of righteous attitudes and tendencies in humanity and it is not showered on anyone who hankers after fame or material prosperity. These enlightened souls have no kith or kin, opponent or rival. The all-pervading Spirit, manifested as Soul of Humanity, is their Deity and they yoke their chosen and beloved souls in the service of the Divine in humanity. In the light of this new insight, I at once recollected the master- disciple relationship of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda, Samarth Ramdas-Shivaji, Chanakya-Chandragupta, Gandhi-Vinoba, Buddha-Ashoka. Where, however, the relationship is based on mere exhibition of funny and frolicsome miracles, it should be construed that a reprehensible tendency like jugglery is going on between the so-called *Guru* and his disciple. *Gandhbaba* could create smell of any flower, *Baghbaba* used to call a tiger in his cottage. *Samadhibaba* remained buried under the ground for a number of days, *Siddhababa* fulfilled desires of the supplicants. Several such folk tales came to mind and I could understand how such people could have been deemed great merely for exhibitions of jugglery of the level of mesmerism. There is nothing spiritual in supernatural feats which an ordinary man cannot perform.

Observing silence, taking food by keeping on the hand, keeping a hand always in a raised position, passing time lying on a cradle and similar other feats are nothing but jugglery. A real saint or his disciple has to tread the ancient path of *sādhanā* propounded by *Riṣis*, of devoting one's life for public good as was done by Kabir, Chaitanya, Samarth Ramdas, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda, Dayananda etc. God is never pleased with those who merely chant His name. He does not need motivated worship or offerings. Chanting of God's name is meaningful only to those who are engaged in beautifying and developing His garden, this universe. These thoughts dominated my mind throughout the day on that *Basant parva*. The Master clearly advised me that efforts for inner self-growth and self-improvement should go hand-in-hand with acts of public service. It was also enjoined on me to perform a chain of *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* during the next twenty-four years, observing certain rules and restrictions. I was also directed to work like a true volunteer in the country's struggle for independence.

Gurudev explained how I should lead my life. He took the reins of my life in his hands, directed and guided it and crowned my every effort with success.

On that day, I wholeheartedly and completely surrendered myself to *Gurudev* and my inmost soul silently pledged: "I hereby surrender to you all that I am and have. I have not seen God but you are my God because you are guiding me towards my highest good. I will explicitly mould my life in accordance with the instructions imparted by you".

The instructions that *Gurudev* gave that day were (i) performance of twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* of *Gāyatrī* in twenty-four years; (ii) installation of an uninterruptedly lighted *ghrit* lamp; and (iii) visiting his retreat in the *Himālayas* four times as per his calls, and living there in some proximate place for prescribed periods for intensive spiritual pursuits (*sādhanā*) under his direct and systematic guidance. Some further instructions, which need not be disclosed here, were also given. All these instructions have been followed throughout my life and all that has been accomplished in my life is the result of *Gurudev*'*s* grace.

Meeting an authentic *Guru* – A unique act of grace

Ramkrishna had gone in search of Vivekananda to his house. Samarth Ramdas had discovered Shivaji. Chandragupta was caught hold of by Chanakya. Gokhale won over Gandhi. This equally well applied in my case.

Gurudev appeared before me in my house in his astral body when I was fifteen year old, activated and empowered my faith and yoked all the energies of my being in a specific direction.

While countless persons wandering in search of a *Sadguru* return empty-handed after being deceived by quacks, what was particularly special about me for which a divine being had to appear before me uninvited, and spontaneously showered his grace on me? The only rational answer is that I had earned merit for this benediction by *sātvika* austerities over many earlier lifetimes. This does not happen randomly. It requires devout austerities and overcoming of evil tendencies over a long period of self-effort.

A combination of determination, patience and devotion creates the firm background for spiritual awakening. Earning such merit is true discipleship, after which it takes no time to attain fulfilment. It is the attainment of merit which takes time. No time is taken in finding the *Guru*. Eklavya's Dronacharya, prepared out of clay, proved more effective than the real one. When Ramananda refused to initiate Kabir, as he was an untouchable, he discovered a device. He lay down in the dark on the stairs of Kashighat. When Ramananda passed through the stairs before dawn to take his bath, his feet suddenly fell on the chest of Kabir. Ramananda was startled. He uttered 'Ram' and drew back. Kabir took this utterance to be his initiation: 'Ram' as his *mantra* and Ramananda as his *Guru*. This is the magic of true faith. When an idol of stone can become God, why cannot an appropriate person be made *Guru* on the strength of faith and devotion? This does not require whispering something in the ear or performing any rituals.

Guru is needed for spiritual awakening because he discharges the dual responsibility of father and teacher. A child is brought up and educated through the cooperation of both the father, who spends a part of his earnings on his maintenance and education, and the teacher who imparts knowledge to him. Father can fulfil the physical needs whereas guidance for spiritual growth is given by the *Guru* from his accumulated store of divine energy. The disciple can do nothing on his own strength. That is the truth behind the saying, 'there is no knowledge without *Guru*'.

There are people who ever remain on vain search of a *Guru*. Even when they are able to find some illumined person they get disappointed because they undeservedly expect the *Guru* to bestow on them their divine gifts; and no true master would squander away his hard-earned attainments on an undeserving person for mere gratification of his ego. A true master is wise

enough to judge the worthiness or otherwise of a seeker.

Dayananda had transformed his life in accordance with the instructions of his *Guru*, Virjananda. Vivekananda relinquished all his desires and took to strenuous *sādhanā* to please his *Guru*. This is the real surrender and devotion to the *Guru*. Hanuman surrendered himself to Ram and apparently lost everything but became a saint and was empowered to accomplish superhuman tasks that Ram alone could have done. Crossing the sea, uprooting mountains, setting fire to Lanka were feats which Hanuman could not have been able to do by himself. On his own he was unable even to protect his master, Sugreeva, from the tyranny of Bali. It was unconditional surrender which created complete integration with the Lord of his devotion. A little water of Ganga falling in a gutter becomes dirty, but if and when a stream of this polluted water embraces the main stream of Ganga, it loses its separate impure existence and becomes holy Ganga itself. Ordinary and ignorant persons lacking any merit become worthy of initiation into the spiritual path by unconditionally surrendering themselves to a competent awakened soul. On embracing fire, a piece of wood becomes identical with and as bright as fire itself.

The aim of devotion is attainment of God awareness, but to establish a link with God, the Invisible, it is necessary to take support of some visible symbol, This need can be fulfilled either by idols of God or by some living *Guru* of spiritual attainment.

My aspirations were fulfilled all of a sudden. No doubt, my *sādhanā* had been started long back in previous births to attain worthiness. Awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* power, God realisation, liberation etc. are all subsequent events. The first and the foremost thing is to acquire the ability to attain and bear with equanimity the inrush of divine light and energy, otherwise it creates imbalance and complications as it happens when one tries to lift a weight beyond one's capacity or eats what one cannot digest.

Surrender to the *Guru* was accomplished on the very first day of our meeting and my loyalty was immediately tested. Two things were specifically enjoined on me: One, turn a deaf ear to what worldly people say and march ahead towards the goal all alone on your own strength; Two, practise devout austerity (*tapaścaryā*) to make yourself progressively more and more purified in heart and brilliant in intellect. For this, sustain yourself only on barley bread and buttermilk during the period in which twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* are performed. You will get all divine gifts which a

pilgrim of spiritual path gets on attainment of competence.

These gifts will be meant purely for being used for benevolent and altruistic purposes and not for fulfilment of petty selfish motives. That momentous day of *Basant parva* became for me a day of adoption of *Gurudev's* discipline and beginning of a new way of life. There is no shortage of beggars in this world but there are also rare benevolent persons who gift away everything to deserving persons. Krishna had gifted away, unasked, plentiful prosperity to Sudama. Meeting of my *Sadguru* was an event of unique and extremely good fortune for me.

A vision of past births which *Gurudev* had shown to me related to spiritual masters of rare eminence who were all shining stars in the reformist tradition of Indian saints. They worked for the wellbeing and upliftment of religion, society, nation and culture of their times.

They were all devotees of God because without divine devotion it is difficult to get rid of sins and impurities and attain spiritual illumination and strength. Along with their own spiritual upliftment, they were engaged in the tasks of transmuting and beautifying this universe, the garden of God.

I had no desire to know more than what I was revealed. I thought it proper to sit on one boat , remain under the benevolent protection and seek support of only one master and not to allow my faith to falter. The events relating to the previous births were quite sufficient for my assurance.

Those who undertake the responsibility of performing momentous tasks have to face and surmount great difficulties at every step of the uphill journey. They have to display extraordinary fortitude. This was required of me also in ample measure. *Gurudev* has been appearing for my help from time to time. He has been immensely augmenting my own insignificant abilities with his great spiritual force and has been rescuing and uplifting me in critical moments, when my own feeble feet were on the point of staggering. I had decided once for all that my life shall remain surrendered at his feet and I will implicitly comply with his directions.

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CHAPTER 3

GUIDELINES BY *GURUDEV* ABOUT MY FUTURE LINE OF ACTION

It has been my experience that compared to a seeker's keenness to remain

in search of a true spiritual guide, the latter is still more keener to find out a deserving devotee. A devotee (*sādhak*) has to be a truly deserving person. Only a person who has refined his thinking, character and attitudes is a true *sādhak*. He is not required to go in search of a *Guru*. The guide himself appears before him, grasps his hand and shows him the path he has to tread. He lifts up the *sādhak* in his lap when he staggers and safely takes him across all obstacles. This is exactly what has happened in my own case. *Gurudev* visited my house uninvited to make me a fit instrument for the execution of his divine assignment and got twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* performed which culminated in *pūrṇāhuti* of *Gāyatrī yagya* of one thousand *kuṇds*. He not only introduced to me but also made me intimate with about one lakh of persons who formed the nucleus of *Gāyatrī mission* and have given me their wholehearted cooperation in the stupendous task of spiritual reawakening of the masses.

During our first meeting, *Gurudev* had directed me to come to the *Himālayas* four times, for periods of about one year each, after completing twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* of *Gāyatrī*.

The first reason for calling me to the *Himālayas* was to ascertain that my soul did not feel lonely in the wilderness and solitude of nature without the company of living-beings and without the requisite living facilities. Secondly, it was to ascertain whether I could establish spiritual identity and intimacy with wild and ferocious animals living there. Thirdly, I was to be introduced to the *Riṣis* through whose divine pursuits (*tapasyā*) the Uttrakhand region of *Himālayas* is so surcharged with spiritual energy that it is called *Devātmā.* These *Riṣis* , when they were in their physical bodies, had infused divinity in the environment and had individually played significant and distinct roles in infusing and activating specific qualities of spiritual light and power in the human psyche. Such life-transforming tasks are impossible of accomplishment by solitary human effort without adequate resources, public co-operation and support.

Gurudev's silent direction to me was to apply the available spiritual energy placed at my disposal for the simultaneous fulfilment of three objectives: (i) to understand how the *Riṣis* of old, in their embodied forms, had utilised the spiritual energies at their disposal for solving the problems of their times by vanquishing the evil forces and by establishing the supremacy of divine way of life: (ii) to understand and comprehend the dimensions of the God-assigned task to be accomplished through me as an instrument: and (iii) to

draw appropriate lessons from the successes and failures of those divine warriors (*Riṣis*) in their battles against the forces of darkness; and to devise effective strategies against the final assault of these evil forces, with the aim of banishing them from the human scene once for all. He told me that the purpose of my pilgrimage to the *Himālayas* was to spiritually charge and equip myself for this epoch-changing task.

Gurudev further said, “Like us you have also to perform a very important task through your astral body. By way of rehearsal you will have to learn how long and in which part of the *Himālayas* your physical body could stay in fit condition to enable you to devote your wholehearted attention to the spiritual mastery and strength needed for the attainment of the aspired ends.”

He continued, “In temperate climate the system is not subjected to the rigours of extremes of heat and cold, and all normal facilities for leading a normal, comfortable life are easily available. On the contrary, to live calmly and unperturbed, with minimal facilities, in the high *Himālayan* regions, with extreme cold and no creature comforts whatever, is a challenge and an opportunity to learn the difficult *art of living*. This itself is *sādhanā*. One is required to master the body like an acrobat, subsist on leaves and edible roots and learn to live fearlessly with requisite precautions for the safety of life and limb amongst ferocious wild animals.

“These inconveniences are there, so long as there is a physical body. All this comes to an end when one withdraws into the astral body. Then there is no botheration for safety from cold and heat, hunger and thirst, sleep and exhaustion. Physically a man can walk only up to a limited distance but a soul in an astral body can instantly reach anywhere and convey its message to the minds of thousands of persons at a time and thus its capacity to help humanity increases manifold. Illumined souls, therefore, work through their astral bodies. Their *sādhanās* are also different from those done physically.

“Physical body has its limitations. Its energy is mostly spent in satisfying physical needs and worrying about weakness, sickness, old age etc. Its advantage, however, is that direct physical acts on the material plane, mutual communication and physical contacts are possible only through a physical body. When physical body becomes old and decrepit, it has to be cast off and tasks initiated through it remain unfinished. That is why those who are divinely willed to effectively work on the material plane for extended periods of time, far beyond the normal human life span, to guide, inspire and empower the chosen few in the vanguard of humanity’s upward and inward march

towards Godhead, have to withdraw into their astral bodies and act upon this world with far greater force and effect from that realm.

"Your physical body will continue functioning until it has outlived its utility. You will then have to leave it and enter the astral body. Your *sādhanā* will then be different and the range of effectiveness of your powers extraordinarily far-reaching. You will have contacts with special souls and will accomplish an epoch-changing task.

"At an appropriate time you will be introduced to this region of *Devātmā Himālaya*. On this side of Gomukh, saints, great souls, live in their physical bodies. You will face several difficulties in this region also. You will have to live in this region for one year each time. Besides, you will be required to stay, for four days each time, in the region known as the heart of the *Himālayas*, which is the spiritual centre of humanity. I will remain with you. Your astral body will be moulded in the usage of your physical body and you will know who live there, how they live and how you will have to live there. By having experience of living in these regions in physical and astral bodies you will reach a state of consciousness in which *Riṣis* remain centred for fulfilment of their specific aims. In brief, this is the purpose of inviting you four times to the *Himālayas*. This will also encompass the spiritual training you have to undergo and the tests you have to pass. Your *puraścaraṇa sādhanā* will not be hampered by these pursuits.

"This region is inhabited by those living in their astral bodies. Circumstances have considerably changed since the last ice-age. Gods formerly living in this region of the *Himālayas*, which is known as *Heaven on Earth*, now live in ethereal space as the present environment here is not congenial to them.

" In ancient times *Riṣis* lived from Rishikesh to Gomukh according to their choice and convenience. This region has now become disturbed due to tourists, pilgrims and professionals. Also several temples have been built to satisfy people's curiosity relating to ancient history and to enable local people to earn their livelihood."

I was told that Madam Blavatsky, founder of Theosophy, was an eminent saint. She was in contact with highly evolved souls living in their astral bodies. She has written in her book that there is a parliament of invisible divine saints in difficult inaccessible regions of the *Himālayas*. Illumined residents of this area are also known as *invisible helpers*. *Gurudev* said,

"It is all true. You will see all this yourself by your divine vision in this region of *Himālayas*, which is my abode." The Tibetan area was a part and parcel of the *Himālayas* in those days. Now the boundaries have changed. Yet the statement of Madam Blavatsky is true. Those living on the physical plane cannot see them but I was assured that I would be able to see them by *Gurudev's* grace.

Gurudev continued, "Keep on waiting for my call. You will be called when it is necessary and when you will be considered fit for test. Do not be overeager on your side; do not start for the *Himālayas* of your own accord, by way of sheer curiosity. It will all be useless. It is my responsibility after you have surrendered to me." Thereafter *Gurudev* disappeared.

Wholehearted execution of the prescribed disciplines

In his first meeting *Gurudev* had prescribed for me three disciplines. Twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* had to be performed for twenty-four years strictly in accordance with the prescribed rules in front of a *ghrit* lamp to be kept lighted uninterruptedly. The second important discipline to be undergone was of writing books for promoting the enlightened good of the masses. This was also essential for my own self-growth and self-education. This needed intense and extensive study and concentration. Side by side, public contacts had to be established to develop my organising skills. The third important responsibility was to play the role of a voluntary freedom-fighter in India's struggle for independence. As a matter of fact, these programmes were not complementary to each other, but none of these became an obstacle in the progress of my *sādhanā* and study; although, in between, I had to visit *Himālayas* twice. The credit for this goes to my divine guide who had taken full control of the reins of my life and had assured constant protection.

I was enjoined by *Gurudev* to have the outlook of a *Riṣi*. I was also told that although I was related to my family, I should remain quite detached from it. I should listen to everybody but should do what I considered appropriate; as it would be well nigh impossible for me to reach the goal if attention is paid to their advice. Spiritual path (*śreya*) and material path (*preya*) are diametrically opposite to each other and only one of them can be followed. If the world was pleased with someone his inmost self will not be happy with him. If the inner soul is satisfied, the displeasure of the worldly people will have to be suffered. This has generally happened in the lives of all true seekers of truth. It is very very rare that the pursuit of higher ideals has

been approved by relatives. More often than not, the human soul had to surrender before the worldly people, high ideals had to be given up and the old soul-suffocating routine had to be carried on.

I faced this difficulty the very first day. With the starting of the series of *puraścaraṇas* I started taking the prescribed food and leading the life of an ascetic (*tapasvī*). This created havoc. People started discussing me in their own way in sweet and sour words. The gist of their advice was that no steps should be taken to disturb the ordinary routinised way by which people earned their livelihood. Although our ancestral property was so large that three generations could have easily been fed and maintained sitting idle, it was stressed that it should all be kept intact for future and the family should be maintained on fresh earnings through the ancestral profession of priesthood. How could the arguments of these people be rebutted? Ultimately, I made one of the three *Gurus* of Gandhiji as my G*uru*, i.e. I kept silent and felt relieved. I simply said that what I was doing was in response to Divine inspiration and thus restored a semblance of peace. I started acting upon my solemnly taken pledge in such a manner as if I had not to take advice from and answer to anybody. On a back look now I see that if such firmness had not been shown my life boat would have been rocked by violent jerks and capsized and I would have missed that opportunity by which, with the help of *sādhanā*, I have been able to do good to myself as well as to the masses. Relationship with God could not have been established with anything less than purity of heart and clarity and brilliance of head.

I was subjected to a second test in my childhood when the non-cooperation movement of the Indian National Congress started. Gandhiji launched the *satyāgraha* movement, called upon true patriots to come out from the smugness of their homes, face the bullets and go to jail.

I heard the inner voice that it was a historical moment which must not be missed. I got my name enrolled in the corps of *satyāgrahīs* of that region. I had to leave my house and go to the front to offer salt *satyāgraha*. The officials of the government and their propagandists had spread rumours that there would be firing and people would be sentenced to long imprisonments, including transportation for life, with a view to dissuading them from taking part in this movement. All my friends, neighbours, family members, relatives came to impress upon me that what I was contemplating to do was a suicidal act. The matter got further aggravated and some relatives threatened to go on fast and commit suicide. My mother, who was my guardian, was tutored to get my name struck off as a co-inheritor (along

with my brothers) of valuable ancestral property and get the names of other brothers entered in my place. My brothers said that none of them would have any relation with me and I would not be allowed entry in the house. I was threatened to be got kidnapped and compelled to live in the camps of dacoits.

I listened to all these threats calmly. The question before me was: what should be given precedence, pressure of the family or the need of the times? I made my soul and God as witnesses and decided to act according to the 'still small voice' from within.

In this context, the persecution of Prahlad appeared before my eyes. I also recalled the story of Dhruva, the determination of Parvati and the life stories of innumerable great men, warriors, saints, reformists and martyrs. None of the family members and relatives of these great personages had supported them. They remained firmly committed to the call of duty on the strength of their own spiritual discernment. I, therefore, became indifferent to what worldly friends, neighbours and relatives said or did. If higher ideals are to be pursued one has to resolutely struggle against greed and cravings.

Despite stiff opposition, I stealthily reached the place which was indicated, launched *satyāgraha* and courted arrest.

There was another event of my childhood which further emboldened my spirit of courage. There was an old sweepress who was suffering from diarrhoea and had festering wounds. She used to cry bitterly but, being an untouchable, nobody entered her house. I consulted a physician about her treatment, arranged for the medicines and started attending on her and nursing her regularly. I also arranged for her food. Sixty-five years ago it was considered to be an offence on the part of a high-caste person to enter the house of an untouchable, treat her and wash her dirty clothes. I was ostracised. Family members, too, did not allow me to enter the house. I used to lie outside on the platform and eat whatever was given to me but did not give up serving the sick woman. This went on for fifteen days and she became well. She always addressed me as '*Bhagvān*' so long as she was alive. In those days, at the age of thirteen, I was all alone. The whole village, including members of my own family, were against me. I kept up my courage of conviction and did not give in.

Courting arrest several times during the freedom struggle, taking the vow of performing twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇas*, treating and serving the sweepress were all tough tests to which I was subjected in my very childhood.

I simultaneously fought on two fronts; against internal weaknesses and against pressures from relatives. This gave me an opportunity to awaken and strengthen my potential spiritual strength. I was greatly benefited from these tests and trials and all my programmes continued progressing towards fulfilment.

The series of *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* went on regularly. A lighted *ghrit* lamp was installed the very day on which *sādhanā* was started. The responsibility of keeping it lit uninterruptedly was taken up by my wife, whom I called *Mātājī*. It required to be looked after constantly lest it got extinguished. This lamp has been burning uninterruptedly since then. When I meditate sitting in front of the flame of this lamp, the mind gets flooded with divine light and warmth. When there is a knotty riddle which cannot be solved by ordinary wisdom, the bright rays of this constantly lighted lamp resolve it instantly for me.

Jap (repeating the *mantra* quietly by way of adoration) of sixty-six *mālās* (rosary), symbolic worship of the picture of *Gāyatrī Mātā* by water, flowers, rice, incense, lighted lamp and *naivedya* (offering of sweets), meditation of rising Sun (*Savitā*) at the time of *jap* and offering of libation to the Sun (*Sūryārghya-dān*) at the end, this was the daily routine which was adopted by me. No *bīj-mantra* or *saṁpuṭ* etc. of *tāntrik* system was added. With the picture of *Gāyatrī Mātā* installed before me, my heart used to get flooded with intense faith and devotion and it appeared as if the *Mother* was sitting before me in person. Sometimes I felt inclined to shed tears of intense love and joy by hiding my face in *Mother*'s *āncal*. During this period of daily worship and meditation, there was never an occasion when my mind did not get instantly absorbed in inner concentration and identification with the Deity of my devotion. Had it not been for the ring of the alarm watch, I could not have felt inclined to come out of that state of trance. Never was there any interruption in this routine of *sādhanā* .

This also applied to study for which no separate time was set apart. Often, I was required to walk and cover long distances in connection with the work of the Indian National Congress. I used to stop reading only when there was any meeting or programme. I used to read while walking. My speed of reading books had been forty printed pages per hour. I used to get at least two hours daily for reading. Thus at the rate of 80 pages a day, I could read about 2,400 pages in a month, 28,800 pages in a year and seventeen and a half lakh pages over the past sixty years. Besides, reading has been as easy for me as taking food or bath and I could cursorily skip

through about three thousand pages daily. This routine has been going on for the last sixty years during which innumerable pages of books, on subjects of my interest, have been read. After the completion of *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* I found more time which I devoted to studying several books and manuscripts in different libraries. This became an invaluable treasure for me.

I did not read a single page for recreation. All that I read was mastered with a view to acquiring proficiency in the particular subject. While writing any article or discussing any matter I could at once recall subjects which I had already read. In my absence, people used to say that I was a mobile Encyclopaedia. Readers of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* are amazed when they find references to so many books, journals and magazines. The same thing applies to *Yug Nirmaṇ Yojnā* and *Yug Śakti Patrikā*. The secret is that I have read with utmost concentration whatever has been useful for me to gain mastery of the subjects of my interest. So all relevant references suddenly appear in my mind at the appropriate time. This, in fact, is the miracle of concentrated *sādhanā*.

There was a primary school in the village of my birth place. From the point of view of formal education, I studied only in that school. Sankrit is part and parcel of our family traditions. My father and brothers were eminent scholars of *Sanskrit*. Giving discourses on ancient scriptures and priesthood were our ancestral profession. I thus acquired adequate knowledge of *Sanskrit* at home. I have taught *Sanskrit* to students up to the standard of *Ācārya* though I do not possess any degree.

The story of studying other languages is interesting. I started writing English words in jail on a shallow iron pan (*taslā*) by using pebbles as pencil. I could lay my hand on an English newspaper ‘Leader’ in jail and started reading English. I used to consult my colleagues and in about a year’s time, when I was released from jail, I had acquired fairly good knowledge of English. Every time during my journey to the jail my vocabulary of English increased due to mutual discussions and gradually I learnt grammar also. In return, I taught my jailmates *Sanskrit* and idiomatic *Hindustānī*. Magazines, journals, dictionaries etc. of other languages have always remained my basic sources of learning other languages. *Gāyatrī* has been called Goddess of Wisdom. I cannot say anything about others but I myself have been miraculously benefited by Her worship. Even professors of Hindi have received considerable guidance from my articles in *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti*, in which *Sanskrit* words have been used predominantly,. I have a feeling of inner upliftment and people are amazed to find that despite my remaining extremely

busy in *sādhanā* etc. so much knowledge could be acquired. The credit for all this goes to *Mahāpragyā*. (the Supreme Divine Intelligence)

Although I participated in *satyāgraha*, launched by the Congress, in compliance with the directions from *Gurudev*, in the beginning I did not understand its significance. When I was given one *sankalp* of doing *sādhanā* for twenty-four years, why was this period split up into two portions of five and nineteen years? When thousands of persons were engaged in *satyāgraha movement*, participation or non-participation by one more person should not have mattered much?

Gurudev had guessed my dilemma at the time of my meeting with him and his divine voice had given the guideline. "*Yug dharma* has its own importance. It should be considered as the need of times and one should rush to fulfil it leaving aside all other work, just as water has to be rushed to the site of fire. In days to come you have to undertake several works of public contact and you will not get better opportunity than this to establish contacts with different strata of society. You will also get an opportunity for rehearsal of the experience gained in previous births and of the lessons learnt in your early age. They are not important from the point of view of personal gain but they answer a need of the times.

Gurudev continued, "In practical life you are to be taught four lessons of (1) wisdom (2) honesty (3) responsibility and (4) courage. These help in the inner growth of the soul and develop brilliance of intellect. With a view to developing the talents required for execution of your future plans of action and also to hone up the instruments needed for the purpose, your participation in India's freedom struggle is essential."

It is not pertinent to discuss here as to what I did for the country, how much I suffered and how I discharged the duties and responsibilities which were entrusted to me. Anybody interested to know about it may read the book 'Freedom Fighters of Agra Division' published by the Information Department of the Uttar Pradesh Government. In those days I was known by the name of *Śrīrām Matta*. The important thing that needs to be understood is the purpose underlying this particular direction of *Gurudev*.

During those ten years of my active participation in the freedom struggle, I interacted with people of different nature in and outside the jail. In those days mass awakening was at its highest peak. I came in contact with several brave, courageous persons with firm determination and I learnt many useful lessons from them. It took me less than a couple of years to learn the art of

winning over supporters, coworkers and appreciators for the stupendous task of revolutionary moral reawakening that was the primary aim and mission of my life. It would not have been possible for me to learn these lessons even by touring the country extensively on my own. Family attachments, feelings of mine and thine were got rid of and I lived a happy life even in adverse circumstances. This created self-confidence. The most important gain was that I developed the attitude of a volunteer, which has helped me to remain humble even at this late stage of my life. The suspense as to why I was directed to perform *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* in two phases was thus removed by my experiences of the freedom struggle.

The Indian National Congress was established about a century back but the Congress in which we worked was altogether different from what it is now and I had peculiar experiences while working in it. Effortlessly, I got an opportunity to establish contacts with several eminent persons. I always conducted myself as a disciplined volunteer. So, whenever any volunteer was needed to serve eminent leaders, I used to be pushed forward in view of my young age. From these contacts, I imbibed many virtues and also got the opportunities of living with Gandhiji in Sabarmati *Āśram* and with Vinobaji in Pavnar *Āśram*. Others went to these great personages for their *darśan* but to me the insights provided by these contacts proved to be celestial boons.

In 1933 the annual session of Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta. In those days the Congress was considered an anti-government organisation. People were arrested and police firing was resorted to on flimsy pretexts. Delegates who were considered important enough were arrested at Bardwan station and sent to a special jail at Asansol, which was originally made by the East India Company for Europeans. I was also arrested along with my three colleagues of Agra district. Eminent persons like Madan Mohan Malviyaji, Devdas Gandhi, Swarooprani Nehru (mother of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru), Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Chandrabhanu Gupta, Kanhaiyalal Khadiwala and Jagan Prasad Rawat were with us in the jail. Malviyaji used to address us daily in the evening throughout our stay there. Malviyaji and Mata Swarooprani used to treat all of us like their children. One day Malviyaji emphasised in his speech that we should beg a paisa from every man and a handful of foodgrains from every woman to spread the message of our movement so that they may realise that the Congress was their organisation and that the freedom struggle was their own struggle, being run with their cooperation and contributions. This thing might not have been important

for others but I took serious note of it. The *Riṣis* of yore maintained themselves, their *Gurukuls* and *Āraṇyaks* on public alms (*bhikṣā*). It had been pointed out to me by *Gurudev* that I was to take up an important assignment in hand. I had been wondering wherefrom the money will come for this purpose. In jail, I got the clue. After my release I applied this formula, while launching important projects of moral and social upliftment and transformation. Amounts running into crores have been spent on these projects through willing and volunteer contributions (minimum of ten paisa or a handful of grains per person per day) from lakhs and lakhs of well-wishers and friends of the *mission*.

Like *Gāyatrī* and *Gangotrī*, Congress had been the fount of my life's course. However, after independence I concentrated only on those tasks which could contribute to the fulfilment of political freedom. Politicians look after the political and economic affairs of the country. But far more important and crucial is the moral, intellectual and social transformation of the society to usher in an era of true equality, fraternity, freedom and harmony. This can be accomplished by persons and organisations committed to deeper values of life. This is the task dearest to my soul.

Except for wearing *khādī*, I withdrew myself from active participation in all other programmes of the Congress from the day of independence. This had the blessings of Bapu and the sanction of my divine guide. When friends sent me a form for accepting pension for having worked as a freedom fighter for about twenty years, I plainly declined to avail of the offer. Eminent persons of those days, who are still alive, would testify that when the time for rewards came, I withdrew behind the curtain.

All the aforesaid three assignments were accomplished with utmost dedication and concentration. In between I also visited the *Himālayas*, when summoned by *Gurudev*. During the two visits before independence, I was kept in the *Himālayas* only for six months each time. I was told that the work of the Congress was important from the point of view of attainment of freedom and so my sojourn for six months each time would be enough. It is not necessary to mention here what I was told and what I was required to do during these sojourns. There are events and happenings even of my work-a-day visible surface life which I consider miraculous and acts of Divine Grace; and my heart is filled with deep gratitude and humility when I recall them.

CHAPTER 4

FIRST CALL OF *GURUDEV* – TESTS AT EVERY STEP

The matter of *Gurudev's* invitation to the *Himālayas* went on increasing like *Matsyāvatār*. There is a story in the *Purāṇa* that a tiny fish happened to enter *Brahmā's kamaṇḍalu* (water pot). When *Brahmā* took water in his palm for sipping, it magnified and covered the entire palm. *Brahmā* dropped it in a pitcher, where instantly it became double the size of the pitcher. Then *Brahmā* threw it in a nearby pond, where it outgrew the dimensions of the pond. Finally, *Brahmā* released it into the ocean, where the tiny-looking fish magnified itself to cover the whole of the ocean. It was then that *Brahmā* understood the mystery that the tiny fish was the incarnation of *Viṣnu*. *Brahmā* then praised the Lord and sought His directions. The *Matsyā*vat*ār* (*Viṣnu* incarnated as fish) then dematerialised Itself, after fulfilling the purpose of the incarnation.

The chain of events in my life was almost similar. My spiritual life commenced when *Gurudev* got me initiated by Malviyaji, who had performed my *yagyopavīt* (sacred thread) ceremony and had explained to me the procedure of *Gāyatrī jap*. I was then a small child, yet I regarded it as a gospel truth and followed it strictly without any interruption. I followed the principle of 'no food without *sādhanā*'. This will continue till the last breath.

Thereafter, at the age of fifteen I had the vision of *Gurudev* in the form of light. He had directed me to perform *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇa sādhanā* for twenty-four years so that I may become a true *brāhmaṇa*. I was also directed to visit the *Himālayas* from time to time, as and when called, to get myself spiritually recharged, after undergoing rigorous tests. After each such encounter, I was entrusted with new and greater responsibilities. Whenever I stumbled *Gurudev* picked me up in his arms.

Hardly an year had passed after my first *darśan* of *Gurudev* in my room of worship on *Basant parva* in 1926, when I received a telepathic invitation in early 1927 to visit the *Himālayas* and meet him again on *Basant pancamī parva*. This first pilgrimage lasted for about a month. Although I was not in any haste, I was eager, no doubt, to see that which, till then was unseen. Others would not have even thought of visiting that region in that season of peak winter and face the hardships, loneliness and danger from wild and ferocious animals. My higher self had to wage a stiff battle against phantoms of fears, safety, security and disinclination to risk hazards for noble aims. This state of dilemma hardly remained for about twenty-four hours. I

informed my family members and started for the journey exactly the next day. They kept mum because they knew that my decisions did not change. It has been my practice throughout life, like *Matsyāvatār*, to appear in toughest tests and come out of them with flying colours.

My first invitation to the *Himālayas* was my first experience of its kind. I had no prior information about hazards which I would be required to face there. In those days there was road and bus conveyance facility from Devprayag upto Uttarkashi only. The entire track after Uttarkashi had to be trodden on foot. The distance between Rishikesh to Devprayag had also to be done on foot. I had no experience as to what essential luggage should be taken which could be carried in a back-pack. I had taken some more luggage, which I had to distribute to co-travellers, and I retained only that much which was essential and which I could carry while going on foot.

Gurudev wanted to test me whether I had the capacity to face adverse circumstances. Anybody else placed in those circumstances would have become nervous, turned back or would have fallen ill. But *Gurudev* wanted to practically teach me that adverse circumstances could be faced and made favourable if the will power was strong. For achieving something significant in life, one has to be strong in spirit.

It is said that in old days *Riṣis* used to live in this region between Rishikesh and Gomukh and the region above Gomukh was the abode of gods. Circumstances, however, changed after the ice-age and gods withdrew into their astral forms and they still roam in the astral space. *Riṣis* of yore shifted to the region above Gomukh. The region below Gomukh is now visited by tourists. Although there are some cottages here and there, it is rare to find any person who may be called a *Riṣi* in the region below Gomukh.

I had heard that *siddha yogīs* (enlightened saints) lived in caves situated in the upper *Himālayan* region but I did not find any proof of it. It is an inhospitable region and it is well-nigh impossible to physically survive there over a long period of time. Casually people do visit but they do not stay there. I came to know from *sādhus* whom I met that they were there out of sheer curiosity in the hope of getting something miraculous from some one. They had no philosophical background and their lifestyle was hardly that of an ascetic. After a brief acquaintance, they used to express their wants. I felt unhappy and marched ahead wondering how such people could provide spiritual inspiration to the pilgrims.

In comparison to these *sādhus*, I found petty shopkeepers in *caṭṭīs* (halting places) of higher moral and ethical standards. They were simple good people. On purchasing flour, pulses., rice etc. they gladly supplied utensils for preparing food free of cost. They sold tea, *bīḍīs*, match boxes, gram, jaggery, *sattū*, potatoes etc., to the travellers. Pilgrims were often devoted but poor. Locally made blankets were available in the night on hire at the *caṭṭīs*.

Cold season and walking on foot, both these were difficult tests. Residents of these places used to shift in this season to the lower regions for their livelihood and for grazing their cattle. Similarly, *sādhus* and hermits also shifted to lower regions to escape the unbearable intensity of cold, icy weather. There used to be utter silence in cottages in the villages. I had to undertake my pilgrimage under such difficult conditions from Uttarkashi to Nandanvan.

There was loneliness throughout with no proper arrangement for boarding and lodging. Wild animals used to roam about freely. Cold icy winds kept blowing all the time. The sun used to remain hidden for long hours behind high hilltops. It was visible at about 10 a.m. and disappeared behind the mountain peaks at about 2 p.m. Even though there was sunshine on the peaks, there used to be dim darkness at the foothills. Hardly some stray person was met on the trail. People stirred out only when there was some inescapable work like death of someone. For me the entire region wore a deserted look. My only inseparable companions were my palpitating heart and thinking mind. I was being put to a test whether or not I could undertake a long journey under such difficult conditions. My faith rooted in the heart told me that so long as Providence wills me to live, no one can kill me. My mind contemplated that there was life in trees, in flora all around. Birds live on them. Fish live in water. Wild animals wander in the forest. They remain alone and quite unclad. I told myself, "When there is profuse and riotous play of life in the forms of flora and fauna, all around, how could this region be called deserted. It is unbecoming of you while professing the maxim *vāsudhaiv kutuṁbakaṁ* to feel yourself cut off from the flow and manifestation of universal Life in myriad forms, of which you are an indivisible portion, Is it not a fallacy to consider human beings alone as living entities?"

My pilgrimage went on and with it continued my thinking. As man is in the habit of living in a community he is afraid of loneliness. Darkness is another big cause of fear. Throughout the day man lives in the light. In the night

lamps are lighted to dispel darkness. But darkness in wilderness is much more frightening. A *yogī* has to get rid of this fear. Fearlessness has been regarded as an important quality of spirituality. In its absence, mind remains unsteady.

Another danger in this awe-inspiring silence of the wilderness of the *Himālayan* region was the fear of wild and ferocious animals who stalk freely in the darkness of the night in search of their prey. Any encounter with such animals in the night amounted to direct confrontation with death. In the all-pervasive silence of the wilderness such animals came out even in day time in search of their prey and water. I had to face all these hazards during this journey.

During my halts at night, I met slithering black snakes and hissing pythons. Lions of small stature are also found in this area who are agile but less powerful than the ones found in the plains. Amongst animals who mainly live on vegetation, bear is the most aggressive. Wild elephants are found in Shivalik ranges and lower regions of the *Himālayas*. All of them, by nature, are harmless unless one sees them eye to eye or they apprehend being teased or provoked. They charge at once if there is the slightest feeling of fear or anger.

Pilgrims are often required to face pythons, snakes, iguanas, bears, panthers, tigers, elephants. They leave the track and flee away when they find persons in a group but they go on their own way if they see a person alone. In that event the person has to take a detour otherwise he is bound to be assaulted by them.

Such confrontations came my way ten to twenty times in a day. Seeing me alone they used to move fearlessly and did not leave the track. I had to do so to save myself. This description appears to be simple in print but it was extremely dangerous in reality, since it was a grim confrontation with death. Sometimes these animals stealthily walked by my side and sometimes they followed me. Fear of death is most benumbing. Although they might not charge but their very sight appeared to be dreadful like actual death. When one had to face such encounters almost every hour of the day, palpitation of the heart was bound to increase. These ferocious animals often used to be in a herd or a pack. If they had attacked they would have cut me into pieces, clawed my flesh out and my life would have at once come to an end.

But there also I had to muster courage and foresight. Death is no doubt great but not greater than life. If there is a feeling of fearlessness and love

within, even these ferocious animals cool down and their nature is changed. During this journey there were about three to four hundred such confrontations but I summoned up courage every time and maintained perfect inner equanimity and an attitude of friendship and fearlessness. I had a firm faith that death has a fixed time, so why should I not face death happily if I have to die here in such circumstances? Why should I be afraid of it? This attitude had to be evoked and maintained resolutely. Loneliness, darkness and messengers of death had all combined to frighten me and warn me to withdraw and turn back but my power of determination came to my rescue every time and my pilgrimage went on proceeding ahead.

I was being put to test whether I was afraid of loneliness. In a few days my resolve became stronger and the creatures of that region became my own kith and kin in spirit. Fear disappeared, loneliness became a friend. With this success in the first question paper, started the series of successes in others.

The next test was of stoically bearing the rigours of *Himālayan* winter. I thought that when by practice, mouth, nose, eyes, head, ears, hands, which remain exposed, did not catch cold, why should the covered parts of the body feel cold? In Norway, Finland and regions around the North pole the temperature was always below the freezing point and still Eskimos and people of other communities lived there. Here the altitude was only about ten to twelve thousand feet above the sea level. I thought the challenge was not insurmountable and means could be found out to seek protection from cold. I came to know from a local man that on the outer surface of the mountains there was severe cold but insides of the caves were comparatively warm. There were some specific types of shrubs which catch fire although they are green, and these can be used to make fire for warming up and cooking. There were vegetables like leaves of *langaḍā*, *marcā* etc. which could be eaten raw. The knots on the stem of birch tree (*bhojpatra*) on being boiled, give a tea-like drink which removes cold. If one sat on his feet in a pose so that his head touches the knees, he would not feel much cold. Feeling less or more cold also depended on one's imagination. Children run here and there scantily clothed, yet they do not feel any discomfort. One cannot speak about old and sick persons, but the fact remained that a young and healthy man cannot die of cold. I adopted these measures and got fully convinced of their efficacy. Cold became manageable. It also helps a great deal if optimistic thoughts are entertained.

One more thing about ferocious animals. Their eyes shine when they move

out mostly in the dark. All animals, even lions, are afraid of human beings. If a person is not afraid of them and they are not teased they do not attack human beings. They can thus be befriended.

In the beginning, I was afraid of them. Then I recalled how wild animals are tamed and trained to perform miraculous feats in circus. I had read the description of a European lady of Tanzania, whose husband was an employee in the Forest Department, that she had tamed two tiger-cubs who had separated from their parents. They used to sleep in her lap even after they had fully grown up. If there is authentic fearlessness and a genuine feeling of love a person can enjoy living in a dense forest. *Ādivāsīs* and *Bhīls* often live in dense forests and they are not afraid of anything. Remembering such instances, I became fearless and thought that a day would come when I would live in a cottage in the forest and a cow and a tiger would drink water at the same place.

Mind in the mass of humanity is weak. It can become powerful, if it is properly trained. I dispelled fear from my mind and continued my pilgrimage in that region. Instead of expecting favourable conditions I thought of making my mind strong enough to be able to live unperturbed under all conditions. I moulded my mind in this direction and adverse circumstances which, in the beginning, had appeared frightening became easy and natural.

The mind came under full control by constant beating, thrashing and moulding during this pilgrimage journey of twenty days. I started feeling as if I was born in this region and have to live here until I die.

From Uttarkashi to Gangotri there was a perilous trail prepared by pedestrians. There was a footpath also from Gangotri upto Gomukh. Tapovan is beyond Gomukh on a still higher altitude and there was no proper track leading to it. It is also a plain plateau. One has to walk according to inner inspiration or by relying on one's fate. After it, there is a series of high mountains before one reaches Nandanvan. This was the place where I was summoned. I reached there at the appointed time and saw *Gurudev* standing there. Our joy knew no bounds. At first, he had visited my house. This time I came to his abode. I ardently wished and prayed for such meetings to recur frequently throughout my life.

This time I was put to three tests: to live alone, endure the tempestuous fury of inclement and icy cold weather and to remain unafraid while surrounded by ferocious animals. I passed in all the three tests.

Our talks did not last for long, *Gurudev* said, “It was necessary to have strong will and determination to attain spiritual power. Adverse circumstances could be transformed into opportunities for self-growth. A person having the soul of a *Riṣi* should not be afraid even of death, what to speak of tigers and lions. You have to spend most of your time under such conditions.”

I was taken to the cave in which he had his abode and was shown a place to sleep. I had a very sound sleep, the duration of which might have been twice or thrice the time of my normal sleep. My entire fatigue and weariness of the journey disappeared, as if I had not walked at all.

I took bath there in a flowing stream and performed worship (*sandhyā*) there. I saw *Brahma-kamal* and *Dev-kand* for the first time in my life. By the smell of *Brahma-kamal* a person enters into *yog-nidrā* in a short time. *Dev-kand* is taken out from the earth. It is like sweet potato and tastes like a water-nut. A ripe *Dev-kand* weighs nearly five kilos. It satisfies one person’s hunger for about a week. These two were the only tangible presents of *Gurudev*. One helped in eradicating physical fatigue and the other in infusing the mind with high spirits.

Interview with the *Riṣis* in the inaccessible *Himālayas*

The first day was spent in having a glimpse of the Supreme Spirit in the natural beauty of Nandanvan. I did not know when the Sun set and the night approached. I was directed to go to a nearby specific cave to sleep. It seemed as if the main purpose was not as much of sleep as of protection of my unacclimatised physique from the intense cold of the region. There was a possibility of a meeting with *Gurudev* again in the night.

Gurudev suddenly appeared that night in the cave. It was a full-moon night of *pūrṇimā*. Bright golden light of the moon was scattered all over the *Himālayas*. There was drizzling of golden particles of snow and it appeared as if drops of gold were raining far and wide. With the appearance of *Gurudev* a circle of warmth was formed, otherwise in that terrific stormy cold night, it would have been difficult to stir out.

I did not enquire about the purpose of his visit at this odd time because I understood that *Gurudev* had been showering his grace on me for some specific purposes. I followed him outside the cave. My feet were moving above the surface. I realised that day why there was the necessity to acquire

siddhis (supernatural powers) of flying in the air, walking in the space. It was more difficult to walk on a rough and rugged glacial snowy surface than to walk on the surface of water. Now-a-days, one may not feel the necessity of such *siddhis*, but they were definitely needed in those days for movement in those inhospitable regions.

I came out of the cave trembling with bitter cold and started moving behind *Gurudev* like his tail in mid-air over the golden *Himālayas*. The purpose of that day's pilgrimage was to introduce me to the *tapasthalī* (place of worship) of ancient *Riṣis*. They had all cast off their physical bodies but most of them had retained their astral bodies. Causal bodies of some of them could also be glimpsed through their astral bodies. I suddenly found myself in a posture of folded hands with my head bowed down in deferential salutation. I was being introduced today to *Riṣis* living in their astral and causal bodies in the *Himālayas*. That night was extremely important and fortunate for me.

Earlier, I had seen only those caves of Uttrakhand during my journey which were easily approachable. I realised today that there was far more unseen compared to what I had seen so far. Small caves were being used by wild animals but bigger ones were orderly, neat and clean and were meant for *Riṣis* who were living in their astral bodies. They still lived there occasionally on account of their past association. All those *Riṣis* were in *dhyān-mudrā* (meditative posture). *Gurudev* told me that they often lived in that state. They did not interrupt their meditation without some valid reason. Their astral bodies along with their names were introduced to me. This spiritual treasure is the speciality and uniqueness of this region.

They all knew beforehand about my visit with *Gurudev*. So whenever both of us appeared before them, they opened their eyes with a gentle smile on their lips and nodded their heads slightly in response to our salutations. There was no conversation with any of them. If any person living in astral body has to say or convey anything he does it not by *baikharī* or *madhyamā* speech but by *parā* or *paśyanti* speech, that is, by awakening intuitive faculty of the listener. That day's aim was to see them only and not to converse with them. A new student who had come to join their class was to be introduced so that he could be provided with the necessary help, if needed. Probably the *Riṣis* had already been informed that I (their embodied spiritual child) could carry forward the divine tasks initiated by them and what my specific role would be and the strategy of action towards that end.

An astral body can arouse inner inspiration and transmit energy waves. But a person in physical body alone can give direct and concrete guidance to embodied human beings and precipitate physical events. Divine beings, therefore, make some physically living person as the instrument for fulfilling their purpose. Till then, I was acting as an instrument of only one guide but now these divine souls of the *Himālayas* could also utilise me as their medium and provide me inspiration, efficacy and competence. With this view *Gurudev* was introducing me to them and all of them without wasting any time and observing any formality, were indicating their acceptance of this offer. Thus this divine pilgrimage continued in the night; and before dawn *Gurudev* returned to his abode leaving me in my cave.

I saw *Riṣi-lok* for the first time that day. I had seen holy places, pounds, rivers earlier in the course of this pilgrimage but till then I did not know which *Riṣi* was associated with which particular location. This I saw that day for the first and the last time. Before sending me back *Gurudev* cautioned me, "Do not try to establish contact on your own with these *Riṣis* and interfere in their work. If they have any direction to give, they would themselves do so. Your understanding with me has also been the same that you will not, on your own, knock at my door. Whenever necessary, I would myself approach you, achieve my purpose and arrange for all the resources. Do not regard this vision which you have seen here as mere satisfaction of a curiosity. All these great divine souls will get their purposes accomplished through you because they cannot do it themselves for want of physical bodies. It has been the tradition to establish mass contact through the medium of some fit instrument like you. Henceforth you should regard instruction of all these *Riṣis* as my own instructions and do whatever you are directed to do." What could I say except nodding my acceptance. *Gurudev* disappeared.

Clarifications about the outline of future programmes

The next day of the stay at Nandanvan was all the more amazing. The vision of seeing *Riṣis* along with *Gurudev* during the previous night was moving before my eyes like a film. As sun spread on the velvety carpet of Nandanvan, it appeared as if heaven had descended on the earth. Flowers of different kinds and colours were thickly scattered on the plain plateau and it appeared as if a green carpet had been spread out.

All of a sudden *Gurudev* appeared. Unlike the previous night, he was now in the same form of field of light in which he had appeared before me for the

first time in my room of worship. *Gurudev* said, "I was aware of your devotion and courage of past births. This time, I called you here, put you to three tests to make sure that you were morally and mentally fit and strong to undertake more important tasks. I have remained with you throughout this pilgrimage and have been watching all the events and your reactions to them and feel fully assured. If your faith had not been unshakable and your vision transparently clear, *Riṣis*, living in their astral bodies in this region, would not have appeared before you and expressed their souls' anguish. They want that their incomplete works be completed. Great souls do not bare their hearts before weak, miserable and incompetent persons. They have expressed their feelings before you, considering you competent.

"If your surrender is genuine you have to carry out, as life's only mission, the programmes chalked out for you with full devotion. The first programme is to perform twenty-four *puraścaraṇas* of twenty-four lakh *Gāyatrī mantras* in twenty-four years. Great competence is required for accomplishing great works and so you have been entrusted with this first programme. The second programme is two-fold. You have to continue your study and take up the translation of *Sanskrit* treatises composed by ancient sages into Hindi and arrange for their publication to make them easily available to the masses. This will help in rejuvenating the almost extinct divine culture which is capable of becoming the bedrock for the future global civilisation. Side by side, so long as you are on the physical plane, you have to facilitate publication of your writings in as many languages as possible, to make available the message of divine life on earth to people at large. This work is related with the capability acquired by you through your first *sādhanā*. To this end, dedicated and erudite persons will gather around you in due course of time, and will carry forward the work initiated by you.

"The third work is to play an overt and covert role as a freedom fighter in the struggle for independence. This struggle will last till 1947. By that time most of your *puraścaraṇas* will have been completed. This is the first phase. At present there are no indications that Britishers will easily grant independence to India and quit. But this aim is bound to be achieved even before your *puraścaraṇas* are completed. By that time you will have gained ample in-depth and broad-based experience and capability to undertake with whole-hearted concentration the primary mission of your life: establishment of a divinised humanity on earth.

"A *puraścaraṇa* should culminate in *pūrṇāhuti* by *yagya*. A *Mahāyagya* after the end of twenty-four *puraścaraṇas* should be on such a scale that

twenty-four lakh *āhutis* (offerings in sacrificial fire) could be given, so that through its medium you may be able to lay the foundation of an organisation. This needs expenditure of lakhs of rupees and cooperation of lakhs of people. Do not believe that you are alone and you have no money. We are with you behind the energy generated by your *upāsanā*. Have complete faith that everything will be done at the appropriate time. People will come to know about the miraculous results of devout austerity and *sādhanā* of a true *sādhak*. This is the first phase of your programme. Go on doing your duty. Do not think that our power is insignificant. You may seem to have limited power but when both of us unite, our power will be multiplied manifold just as one and one put together make eleven. Always remember that it is a divinely guided *mission*. Then why have any doubt ? It is not necessary to chalk out any programme in detail at present. Go on with your studies, *puraścaraṇas* and your work as a freedom fighter. Live at present in your birth place and accomplish all these three programmes of the first phase.

"I may also give an indication of the future plan. The task of publication of literature and setting up of a widespread organisation for moral and spiritual upliftment are to be accomplished at Mathura. *Pūrṇāhuti* of the *puraścaraṇas* will also be performed there. Press, publication and other activities relating to manifestation of divinity in humanity and descent of heaven on earth will also be initiated in an organised manner at Mathura. This attempt will take the form of an unprecedented historical movement.

"The third phase is to fulfil the will of all these *Riṣis* who live in their astral bodies here. You have to sow the seeds for revival of *Riṣi* traditions which will sprout and spread worldwide in due time. This work will have to be done in the *Tapobhūmi* of *Sapta-Riṣis* at Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar. At present, I have given you only a hint. In course of time, you will be summoned here and detailed outlines will be explained to you. You will be summoned thrice for these three purposes.

"During the fourth phase you will have to shoulder the most difficult work relating to the extremely intricate and formidable global problems. You will know, in due course, what is required of you and it will be accomplished."

I had heard that *siddha puruṣas* lived in the caves of the *Himālayas* and by merely seeing them a person could get occult powers. In my journey, I found no truth behind such beliefs. Without my saying so, *Gurudev* knew my suspense. He placed his hand on my shoulder and asked, "Why do you feel

the need of a *siddha puruṣa*? Are you not satisfied by having a glimpse of the astral bodies of the *Riṣis*? Are you not satisfied with what has been revealed to you through me?"

It was not a matter of lack of confidence but a mere curiosity. *Gurudev* read my mind and said in a jovial mood, "There are such *siddha puruṣas*, no doubt; but two new factors have intervened, requiring these divine souls to withdraw into their astral bodies. First, the easy and rapid means of communication and transport have increased manifold the rush of tourists (as opposed to pilgrims) to these regions, making uninterrupted *sādhanā* impossible. Secondly, if they shifted to still higher regions, it would have become well nigh impossible to sustain their physical bodies under those inhospitable conditions. So they have abandoned their physical bodies and now live in their astral bodies which are not physically visible and they are not required to do anything to satisfy their physical needs. Therefore, all these divine souls have not only shed their physical forms but also the location of their stay. They have even changed their routine of *sādhanā*. Moreover, they can be visible only to genuine *sādhaks* who have familiarity with occult planes of consciousness; and they do not shower their grace on undeserving persons masquerading as seekers of truth. When you come to the *Himālayas* next time, you will have a glimpse of such *siddha puruṣas*."

When *Gurudev* had appeared before me for the first time in my room to guide me, I had come to know how *Devātmās*, who are consciously aware of the Infinite (*Parabrahma*) live in astral bodies. It was my own childish ignorance which entertained this curiosity. I was truly blessed by seeing the *Riṣis* in their astral bodies and by the assurance given by *Gurudev* that I would have their glimpse during my next visit to the *Himālayas*.

Gurudev said, "When I summon you again you have to be here for a period extending from six months to one year. Your body has now become fit for living in conditions prevalent here. You will have to come here three times to strengthen and ripen all that you have practised here and all arrangements will be made to fulfil all your basic physical needs. This *tapasyā* in seclusion and solitude is also necessary because you will be able to learn patience and endurance which are needed for shifting from the physical body into the astral and from astral into the causal. The human body is afflicted by hunger, thirst, cold, heat, sleep and fatigue. One can hardly overcome them living at home because all facilities are available there and there is no challenge for practising devout austerities, penance and endurance. In the

same way, mind is overwhelmed by six kinds of impurities which are inherent in the ordinary day-to-day life of the world and it is essential to retire to a secluded place to overcome and transcend them. These are: passion (lust), anger, avarice, delusion, pride and jealousy. You have to live separately in solitude in the *Himālayas* to practise physical endurance and mental austerity and penance to fight against internal infirmities. Thus, by living three times for a total period of about three years in the *Himālayas* and by establishing public contacts during the rest of the time you will be put to a test to ensure that your devout austerity has become well-grounded."

This programme was chalked out by *Devātmā Gurudev* and was in tune with my own inner aspirations. As a result of my association with saintly persons (*satsang*) and regular studies and contemplation (*svādhyāya*), I was fully convinced that by exercising control over the ten organs of sensation and action and the invisible mind, a person can get rid of dispersion of life energy and his inner powers can be awakened. This is the highway for becoming a *siddha puruṣa* even while living this physical life. Restraints of the organs, restraint in respect of use of material wealth and time and restraint of thoughts, these are four kinds of *sanyam* (self-control). Once these are fully regulated and controlled a person gets liberated from lust, anger, greed, and attachment, attains self-transformation and acquires *siddhis*.

I wanted to remain engrossed in *tapaścaryā*. But how could I do that? One who has surrendered himself to the divine will, has no choice of his own. Therefore, when I heard from *Gurudev* what I was required to do I was too happy to contain myself and started waiting anxiously for the appropriate time.

Gurudev said, "Our talks are now over. Go to Gangotri where arrangements have been made for your stay, food etc. and start your *sādhanā* sitting on Bhagirath Shila, Gouri Kund. After completing austerities in solitude return to your home. I will be watching over you regularly."

Gurudev disappeared. His messenger left me at Gomukh from where I reached the place which was indicated. After completing the austerities at Bhagirath Shila I returned home. During the return journey I did not face the type of difficulties which had tested me at every step of the onward journey. They were the tests in which I had succeeded.

When I came back home, my weight had increased by eighteen pounds and my face had filled up and become radiant with an inner glow. My vitality

had considerably increased. I was always in a jovial mood. People asked for *prasād* of *Gangājī*. I gave a pinchful of sand of Gangotri and some water of Gomukh as prasad to every one. This was the only tangible thing which I had brought with me. In fact, this pilgrimage was an important turning point in my life. Although I had visited the *Himālayas* subsequently also and it is my spiritual home, the very first *darśan* (sight) of the imperceptible divine *Riṣis* who controlled and orchestrated from behind the scenes the affairs of this earth, during my visit with *Gurudev* left an indelible imprint on my inner self. I had also an inkling of the aim of my life, my future programme and also about the awakened souls who were to associate with me as my colleagues. My first visit to the *Himālayas* is a story of experiences which can give real inspiration to genuine seekers of truth.

Carnal mind was defeated – I succeeded

I learnt the truth about the existence of *siddha puruṣas* during my first journey to the *Himālayas*. I was disillusioned of the earlier notion that I had in the matter and also disillusioned others who had similar notions. Time and again, I have been emphasising upon others that a meeting with saints, *siddha puruṣas* is not possible unless requisite competence is attained because they live in astral bodies and appear only before those who are worthy to see them.

A detailed description about my pilgrimage to the *Himālayas* is given in my book titled “Colleagues in Solitude” (*Sunsān-ke-Sahacar*). This book is a literary travelogue. One gets a clue from it how desires, fear and adverse circumstances can be overcome through will-power. A person who has to take to the spiritual path has to make his mind and soul strong. I have explained in it why the *Himālayas* and the banks of the Ganga are most suited for *sādhanā*. The main factor behind the fear of loneliness is the unstable mind. If the mind is steadfast and strong, there is no need of companions; and man, like animals, need not be afraid of loneliness.

Even ferocious animals are afraid of human beings. Man possesses sufficient intelligence to defend himself. If a man summons up courage and thinks that his hands, feet, eyes, face, mind and intellect are constantly with him to guide him, there is no reason for him to be afraid. Only few animals are ferocious and they can be faced with fearlessness and a feeling of love. Raja Harishchandra lived in the cremation ground and served as a sweeper. Masais of Kenya live amidst tigers in dense forests. *Ādivāsīs* live in dense

forests surrounded by snakes, tigers etc. There is, therefore, no reason why an intelligent person of steadfast will cannot live there.

A person comes all alone in this world. He eats, sleeps, walks alone. He has ultimately to leave this world alone to the invisible world. As a natural consequence of aspiring to lead a spiritual life there should be, at least, so much attitudional change in our mind that we are able to feel happy in all circumstances. By practice our body can be moulded in any manner we like. Eskimos of North pole region live only on fish. Persons living in high regions of inaccessible *Himālayas* and Alps live long despite the lack of normal facilities and creature comforts. Animals can live on grass. If man also selects some particular useful leaves as his diet he can easily subsist on them after some practice. I had several such experiences in my first journey to the *Himālayas*. My wayward mind came under control and carnal tendencies were thrown out and replaced by positive, joy-filled thoughts and experiences.

God has provided alternatives to face the inclemency of weather. When there is snowfall all around, there is adequate warmth inside the caves. In Gomukh region there is a shrub which is combustible. Similarly there is a particular vegetation which produces flickering light in the night. *Dev-kand* grown inside the earth in Tapovan and Nandanvan is extremely sweet like sweet potatoes. Outwardly it has a stem like grass but if it is dug out it has a giant-sized root sufficient to nourish a person for a week. It can be taken either raw or after roasting on fire. The drink prepared by boiling the knots grown on the stem of birch tree is so warmth-giving that a man gets perspiration in bitter cold. It is a tasteful drink which can be taken with or without salt. The skin of birch tree can be used, like cloth, as bedding and covering. God has thus made all arrangements to enable a person to face the fury of inclement weather. Man gets disturbed by infirmity of his own mind or by depending only on things to which he is habitually accustomed. If a man becomes self-reliant, three-fourths of his problems are solved and other alternatives can be found for the remaining one-fourth. He can thus adjust himself in all circumstances. He finds himself in difficulties only when he wants that all others should act according to his wishes and outer conditions should always be in his favour. If a person changes himself he can adapt himself to all circumstances and lead a happy and vibrant life.

I had heard and read all these things but I put them into practice only during this pilgrimage of the *Himālayas*. It was a good training, a kind of

tapaścaryā, which gave me an opportunity to exercise control over my wayward mind. Now I do not have any difficulty in facing adverse circumstances. It hardly takes any time for me in converting unfavourable circumstances into favourable opportunities for soul-growth.

There was no scope in this solitude for passion, anger, and illusion. Fear and temptation, which appeared by way of tests, were dispelled smilingly without any difficulty. False sense of self-pride did not work here. I thought, "I am a soul, I am light personified. I am all powerful. Fear and temptation cannot overpower and drag me down." Seeing my mind firm and determined all forces of evil conspiring to drag me down into the pit of self-ruination beat a hasty retreat, in disarray. It is not appropriate to describe all such events which tested the rocklike firmness of my fortitude and character, since I am still alive and it might be construed as self-praise. I have simply to say here that a pilgrim of spiritual path has to encounter the onslaughts of fear and temptation and has to gird up his loins to face the challenges. One who does not prepare himself to go through this baptism of fire has to repent like the ringmaster of a circus who breaks his limbs and endangers his life by performing his feats without necessary preparation, in a haphazard manner.

Amongst *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā*, *sādhanā* is the most important. The rituals of *upāsanā* (worship) can be performed by anybody just as he does his other routine chores. Piety, benevolence, doing good to others, fall within the purview of *arādhanā*. Nothing more remains to be done if a person has reformed himself by *sādhanā*. An elevated soul works effortlessly and naturally for universal Good. It becomes his only preoccupation and he acquires mastery in it. I had to perform *sādhanā* of self-control and mental restraint during my first journey to the *Himālayas*. Whatever divine attributes I have been blessed with are the result of *sādhanā*. *Upāsanā* has become a mere pastime.

At home, I used to sleep for four hours daily as I had to attend to various types of work. Here in the *Himālayas*, I slept for six hours daily because before sunrise one could do nothing except mental *jap*. Due to the height of mountains sunrise here is late and darkness sets in much earlier than in the plains Therefore, out of the twelve hours of darkness six hours were set apart for sleeping and six hours for *upāsanā*. There was no compulsion to take bath before *upāsanā*. It was possible to bathe and dry clothes only at noon. I had to chalk out my daily routine according to the circumstances

obtaining there.

The one thing that needs special mention about this first journey to the *Himālayas* is that I had perfected the art of moulding my mind according to the circumstances. Figuratively speaking, half the journey towards the appointed goal of life had been covered during this first pilgrimage. Pressures, no doubt, had to be faced in abundance in the first year but raw iron had been rid of dross through this fire of baptism and had been converted into strong steel capable of being profitably utilised for any purpose in future.

My life before going to the *Himālayas* was altogether different. Life was going on somehow with all the facilities and resources available at hand. Everything appeared to be straight and simple. But no sooner did I reach the *Himālayas* everything was topsy-turvy. Circumstances there were almost akin to those which a person newly recruited in the army is required to face when, on account of the outbreak of war, he is required suddenly to rush to take up position at the battle front and give an account of his valour.

The direct result of this pilgrimage was that my carnal mind was totally subdued and my higher self won decisively. The mind tried to evade and procrastinate like a new bullock who is yoked to the plough for the first time. But it did not get any support from anywhere because the farmer behind the plough (the awakened soul) was bent upon taming it at all costs. Ultimately the mind was left with no alternative but to submissively assent to be yoked to the plough.

I had to face altogether new formidable challenges for the whole year and an apprehension arose in my mind that such a difficult test was bound to adversely affect my health and the doors for material wellbeing would be finally closed for me.

In all fairness, I must share with the readers that once such a base materialistic thought did win my mind. Several hypocrites have hoisted their banners of religiosity and piety in the name of the *Himālayas* and have declared themselves to be *siddha puruṣas*. I was myself acquainted with the life stories of several such persons. I thought, why should I not do the same and indulge in merry-making for the whole of life? As soon as this thought arose, I resolutely pushed it, there and then, out of my mind. I understood that my mind was being put to a test. I thought that when material resources for luxury and comfort could be amassed by ordinary intelligence,

why should I be a hypocrite and defame the *Himālayas*, *siddha puruṣas*, God and *tapaścaryā*?

My interview with the divine *Riṣis* in the *Himālayas* changed me completely. Throughout, there was a battle going on between the carnal mind and the higher self but ultimately my higher self returned victorious from the *Himālayas*.

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CHAPTER 5

SECOND ROUND OF PILGRIMAGE AND PROJECTION OF THE FIELD OF WORK

A period of about ten years had passed since I had been summoned to the *Himālayas* to appear in the first test. It was not considered necessary to call me in between. I used to see *Gurudev* in the same posture in which I had seen him for the first time and he used to express his approval of what I was doing. Never did I feel that I was alone. Throughout these ten years I felt that he was always with me.

The struggle for freedom of India was continuing. The weather was fine. I again received a message, after I had returned from a visit to Sabarmati *Āśram* in 1937, to reach the *Himālayas*. His orders could not be ignored. I informed my family members and started for the pilgrimage, the very next day. Motorable road was upto Uttarkashi only. Road construction work beyond Uttarkashi was in progress.

The route was known to me. Weather was not so cold as it was last time. *Caṭṭīs* were not desolate as pilgrims were coming and going. I found no difficulty this time. I had comparatively less luggage with me. Although I

was not feeling as comfortable as at home, the inconveniences of the journey on the whole were not unbearable.

I was not put to tests like the ones to which I had been subjected last time. The way upto Gangotri was well-beaten and known. Only the track of fourteen miles from Gangotri to Gomukh changed every year due to melting of ice and breaking and falling of rocks. Small rivulets also sometimes changed their course on account of falling of rocks. This route can be crossed by seeking guidance of some local persons or by using one's own hunch and intuition. In this manner, I reached Gomukh.

I had to cover the rest of the journey with *Gurudev's* messenger. He was a shadowy person of the status of *Vīrbhadra* and was in his astral body. *Gurudev* used to give different assignments to him from time to time. Whenever I visited the *Himālayas*, he used to guide me from Gomukh to Nandanvan and back. By his help I reached the destination in comparatively less time. There was no conversation between the two of us during these journeys together.

As soon as I reached Nandanvan *Gurudev* appeared before me in his astral body. My excitement and joy knew no bounds. My lips started trembling and the nose became wet with tears. I felt as if some separated vital organ of my own body had been miraculously restored to me and I had been made whole again. As a symbol of his deep love, he put his hand on my head. The formality of adoration and blessings was thus completed. *Gurudev* hinted to me about meeting the *Riṣis* again for seeking their guidance. I was overwhelmed.

Almost all the *Riṣis* of *Satyug* live in this region of the inaccessible *Himālayas* in their astral bodies. I had met them here earlier. Although they do not need any specific place or objects for maintenance of their astral bodies, they have each, for their convenience, reserved a specific cave.

In my first visit, I could simply bow before them and received their blessings indirectly. This time I had the privilege to listen to their messages. *Gurudev* took and introduced me to each one of them. Their forms appeared as condensed light. But when I became aware of and identified myself with my subtle body I could see them in physical bodies in which they lived in *Satyug*. They were in the same forms in which worldly people see them in their imagination. Necessary formalities were observed. I prostrated on their feet. They touched my head. I was thrilled and was overwhelmed with joy.

Coming to the main purpose, they said through '*parāvāṇī*' that the life-transforming missions that they had initiated for upliftment of humanity while in their physical bodies had become almost extinct. What remained was nothing but their ruins. They said that they are deeply pained when by their divine insight they perceive the present conditions. The entire region from Haridwar to Gangotri was the region of *Riṣis* in which they used to remain engrossed in *tapaścaryā*. There were several *Āśrams* here and there, on the lines of *Gurukul Āraṇyak* of *Riṣi* Jamadagni at Uttarkashi. All *Riṣis* were engaged in their own research work and *tapaścaryā*. *Devtās* (gods) used to live where the *Riṣis* lived in their astral forms at present. After the ice-age everything has changed and the missions of the *Riṣis* have almost become extinct.

The *Riṣis* said that some temples have, no doubt, been built here and there in Uttrakhand so that offerings in the form of money could be made to deities and the priests (*pujārīs*) may earn their livelihood. But nobody asks for or gives an indication of who the *Riṣis* were, when they lived in physical form and what they did. Thus *Riṣi* traditions have almost vanished.

All the *Riṣis* whom I was introduced repeated almost the same sad story. While bidding farewell there were tears in their eyes. It appeared as if all of them were sad and afflicted with sorrow. What could I say? How could I do the missionary work which so many *Riṣis* used to do? I had no strength of my own to do it. I was moved when I saw them heavy-laden with sadness. I thought, had God made me capable enough, I would not have remained mute and returned in this manner after seeing the *Riṣis*. Silence overtook me. I was stupefied. There were tears in my eyes. It pained me as if I had been stung by a scorpion to see so many *Riṣis* (who were all great and most capable) so unhappy, helpless and concerned.

Gurudev's soul and my soul were responding in synchronicity. We were looking at each other. His face was also sad. Oh God! What an odd time has come when no successor of these *Riṣis* has been born ? Their lineage has come to an end. Not a single purposeful activity which was initiated by the *Riṣis* is alive at present. There are crores of *brāhmaṇas* and millions of (so-called) saints. If amongst them there had been only ten or twenty true *brāhmaṇas* or saints, they would have worked wonders like Buddha or Gandhi.

I recalled that in the past when the princess (daughter of the king of Kashi) shed tears and asked, "Who will revive the *Vedas*?" Kumaril Bhatt appeared

and said, "Please do not lament so long as Kumaril is alive on earth." Kumaril Bhatt achieved what he undertook to do. But today there is no *brāhmaṇa*, no saint and a *Riṣi* is almost out of question. Only hypocrites are seen screaming everywhere like wolves disguised as lambs. Such ideas filled my mind for the whole day after I had returned to my cave. *Gurudev* was reading my mind. He, too, was unhappy like me.

Gurudev said, "Then do one thing. Let us again go to meet all the *Riṣis*. Tell them: 'If you so direct, I may sow the seeds but you will have to do the manuring and watering so that the crop my grow. Atleast by making such an offer you will feel much relieved'. Also ask them how to make a beginning and what will be its outline. Also tell them, 'I will definitely do something. If all of you are kind enough to shower your grace, there is bound to be greenery in this deserted graveyard'."

On *Gurudev's* command I could even say that irrespective of the consequences I was prepared to jump into the fire. *Gurudev* could read my mind. This time, I saw his face beaming with joy like *Brahma-kamal*. *Both* of us were quiet but happy. We decided to again meet all the *Riṣis* whom we had met last night. When they saw us again, each one of them expressed satisfaction as well as amazement.

I stood spellbound, with folded hands and head bowed down before them. *Gurudev* conveyed my aspiration, resolve and zeal to them indirectly in *parāvāṇī* and said, "He does not lack life-transforming energy. He will do whatever he promises to do. Kindly indicate how the seeds of the tasks left unfinished by you are to be sown. If manuring, watering etc. is done by us, his efforts will not be in vain."

Thereafter, *Gurudev* invited them all to attend, in astral bodies, the *pūrṇāhuti* of *Sahastra-kuṇḍī Gāyatrī yagya* which was to be performed at Mathura on the completion of *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* in the year 1958 and pointing towards me said, "He is a monkey but *Hanuman*, a bear but *Jamvant*, a vulture but *Jatayu*. Kindly direct him and rest assured that what has been left unfinished will be completed and the sapling will grow up into a huge tree." He further said, "Why should we be disappointed? Why should we not rely on him when he had discharged with great devotion responsibilities which were entrusted to him during his past births?"

This talk was going on with one of the *Riṣis* but hardly did it take a moment for this invitation to reach them all and they gathered together. Disappointment disappeared, hope was revived, and future programme was

chalked out. It was resolved that seedlings of divine tasks that the *Riṣis* had been doing be sown again in a field, a nursery of fragrant flowers of divine aims and purposes be nurtured and then transplanted all over the globe, so that the world blooms again with divine fragrance.

This was the scheme of building *Shantikunj* which was to be undertaken after conclusion of my stay at Mathura. The schemes of building *Gayatri Nagar* and raising the structure of *Brahmavarchas Shodh Sansthan* (Research Institute) were also explained in detail. Each and every word which I was told was engraved on my mental canvas and I decided that soon after completion of twenty-four *Gāyatrī puraścaraṇas* of twenty-four lakhs each, I would prepare an outline of this work. It was impossible that a person who was recipient of *Gurudev*'*s* protection and patronage could ever be unsuccessful.

I stayed for a day more. Explaining in detail about the *pūrṇāhuti* of *puraścaraṇas Gurudev* said, "I have been closely observing all the events and activities of the past few years of your life and rectifying the lapses, if any. I called you this time to explain to you the plans for the future. There is not much time now left for completion of your *puraścaraṇas*. Go to Mathura, complete them and start the second phase of your life from Mathura.

"Next to Prayag, Mathura is a central place in the country. It is convenient from the point of view of communication. After independence, your political activities will be over, but the work towards the fulfilment of your life's primary mission will continue. Political restructuring is bound to be there. Government will look after the economic restructuring and other allied matters but three more transformations will have to be initiated through the agency of moral and spiritual movements. The country became enslaved and weak not because there was paucity of brave persons who could defeat the aggressors. Internal strife and weaknesses were responsible for the downfall and degeneration of the country. Others had only taken advantage of these shortcomings.

"Moral, intellectual and social transformations are to be accomplished. For this, it is necessary to gather around you a band of dedicated and awakened persons and to explain to them the highlights of the work to be done. So, leave your village and go to Mathura, hire a small house there and publish a monthly magazine and also publish material relating to these three kinds of transformations. In due course, you have to build a grand *Gāyatrī* temple near Mathura in the land where Durvasa *Riṣi* had performed *sādhanā* and make arrangements for the board and lodging of your colleagues. Then you

have to perform a *Mahāyagya*, after the completion of twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇas*, by way of *pūrṇāhuti*. It has always been the tradition in *anuṣṭhāns* to perform *yagya* along with the *jap*. After completion of twenty-four *anuṣṭhāns*, each of twenty-four lakhs of *jap*, you have to celebrate a *Mahāyagya* in a *yagyaśālā* comprising of one thousand *kuṇḍs* and offer twenty-four lakh *āhutis*. On that occasion foundations of a huge organisation will be laid which will initiate the work of mass awakening through the agency of moral and spiritual movements. This is the first phase of the completion of *anuṣṭhān*. After discharging this responsibility, you have to go to Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar, live there and complete the work of revival of *Riṣi* traditions for which you have given your word to the *Riṣis*."

Gurudev explained in detail how the work at Mathura was to be done. He also indicated the outline of the work of translation of ancient scriptures, their publication and publicity and setting up of an organisation of *Gāyatrī parivār*.

I had assured *Gurudev* in my very first meeting with him that nothing would be left undone to carry out his directions. How were the needs of money and manpower to be met for the accomplishment of so huge a task? *Gurudev* read my mind, laughed and said, "Do not worry about these material and human resources. Start sowing whatever you possess. Its harvest will be hundredfold. All the tasks which have been entrusted to you will be fulfilled." *Gurudev* himself indicated to me what I possessed, how and when it was to be sown and how and when it would yield the rich harvest.

I kept everything which *Gurudev* said firmly in my mind. There was no question of forgetting it. How could a soldier forget the command of his general? I could not neglect or disregard what I was asked to do.

Our interaction concluded. This time I was directed to stay in the *Himālayas* only for six months. All necessary arrangements were made for my stay. *Gurudev*'*s Vīrbhadra* left me at Gomukh. I reached the indicated destination and stayed there for six months. When I returned home my health was much better. My happiness and earnestness had increased. It was reflected on my face. People started saying that there was some haven of happiness and comfort in the *Himālayas* to which I periodically retired and from which I returned every time far more healthier and happier.

I now prepared to shift to Mathura. I had visited Mathura once but did not know anybody there. There was great scarcity of houses in those days at Mathura. I went in search of a small house suitable for the publication of

Akhaṇḍ Jyoti. After considerable search, I found a house in Ghiyamandi which was lying vacant for quite a long time. The land-lady was an old woman. When I asked about the rent, she said it was fifteen rupees per month. She handed over the key of the house to me. I went inside and found that in all there were fifteen rooms in it. Although the house was in a dilapidated condition, it was not costly from my point of view. I paid one month's rent in advance. The land-lady was extremely happy.

I went to my village, brought my family and luggage and started living in it. There was some whispering in the whole locality as if my decision to live in this house was a matter of astonishment. On enquiry, I was told this was a house haunted by ghosts. Whosoever had come to live in it had suffered loss of life and property; and nobody could stay here long. I was told that being an outsider, I had been befooled, because nobody could have rented out such a huge, three-storeyed house having fifteen rooms, for a paltry monthly rent of rupees fifteen. I was warned that I would be harmed.

I decided to continue living in that house because so cheap, spacious and useful accommodation could not be had elsewhere . It turned out to be true that the house was haunted by evil spirits. There was tumult and turmoil throughout the first night on the roof of the house and shrieking sounds of jesting, wagging, weeping and fighting were heard. There was no electricity in the house. I took a lantern, and went up and saw some shadowy male and female figures running away. I could not meet them. They did not harm me. This continued for about ten days.

One night, I went up at about 1 A.M. with a lantern in my hand and asked the shadowy figures to stop. They stopped. I told them, "You have been living in this house for quite a long time. Let us come to a gentlemanly compromise. You may live in seven rooms on the top floor and we will stay in the remaining eight rooms. Thus you will not be inconvenienced. We will also not be bothered." Nobody replied, although they remained standing. From the next day everything changed. On my part, I complied with the terms of the compromise. They also appeared to be agreeable to the arrangements. Sounds of some movement on the roof were, no doubt, heard sometimes but there was no mischief or disturbance which could upset our sleep, frighten the children or cause any obstruction in the work. I got the damaged portion of the house repaired at my cost.

Publication of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* was again started from this house. I started corresponding with *parijans* and associates from here. In the first year itself

about two thousand subscribers were enrolled. I used to write letters to them and invited them for personal contacts.

I used to study while going for a walk for two hours daily. My *anuṣṭhān* continued in my small room of worship. In place of political work relating to the Indian National Congress, I speeded up my writing work. My pen started moving in writing books and articles for *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* and translating ancient sacred *Sanskrit* texts for educating the masses through the medium of moral and spiritual instruction. *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* was printed in my own hand-operated press. This routine went on. But I was worried throughout how money and manpower would be arranged to accomplish the huge task of publication, installation of the press, building Gayatri Tapobhumi and performing a huge *yagya* which had not been performed since after the *Mahābhārata*? For this the message of *Gurudev*, 'Sow and Reap' used to appear before my open eyes often. This message was now to be materialised, in the field of society. I had to become a true *brāhmaṇa*, devoid of all possessions (*aparigrahī*). My mind started constantly visualising the outline for the achievement of this noble aim.

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CHAPTER 6

SOWING OF THE SEEDS FOR SUBLIMATION OF ATTITUDES AND THOUGHTS – ANOTHER INVITATION FOR PILGRIMAGE TO THE *HIMĀLAYAS*

The movement for sublimation of attitudes and thoughts of the masses, known as *Vicār Krānti Abhiyān*, was born at Mathura. My determination to sublimate the attitudes and thoughts of crores of people is being materialised through this movement. The *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya* performed in 1958 was

simply a medium for the meeting of *parijans* who were connected with me since previous births and who had to play an important role in the fulfilment of the mission of my present life. About one lakh persons took a pledge in this *yagya* to root out the vices from their families, their personal lives and from the society. This was a *Narmedh yagya*. In this *yagya*, I invited and called upon public-spirited, other-centred persons to join the movement as my colleagues and dedicate themselves to selfless service of society. In fact, I was a mere channel for the flow of divine energy of the invisible miracle-worker, my *Gurudev*, for building up the structure of a mighty movement for bringing about a total transformation in the hearts and minds of the masses.

It was in Mathura, that a comprehensive scheme was chalked out to spread the light in every village, by organising *Gāyatrī yagya* and *Yug Nirmāṇ sammelans* for moral, intellectual and social upliftment. All dynamic and inspired persons who had participated in the *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya* at Mathura took up the responsibility to set up the branches of the *mission* at their respective places and perform similar *yagyas* there. In other words, in that spiritually surcharged atmosphere of *Mahāyagya,* each of these vibrantly alive persons was inspired to take upon himself the responsibility of finding out at least a thousand thoughtful persons from the surrounding area and enlist them as active workers of the *mission*. All these celebrations were planned for four days each. Music and discourses were to be organised for three days in which detailed outline and working methods for implementing the three transformations were explained, and on the fourth day people were asked to take a pledge in the presence of sacrificial fire of *yagya* to give up vices and adopt righteous way of life.

These celebrations were most successful. About a crore of people listened to the ideology of the *mission* and millions took a pledge to give up vices, blind faith and evil customs. In most of these functions, marriages without dowry and pomp and show were also solemnised. Later, in Mathura a *yagya* of hundred *kunḍs* was performed in which ideal marriages of one hundred couples were celebrated. Since then, such celebrations have become a regular feature of the *mission's* activities and every year many persons are being benefited by this movement.

It is not in public interest to disclose details of several mysterious events which are linked with the important occasion of *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya*. *Gurudev* has forbidden their disclosure during my present life span. There were great tangible benefits from this *yagya*. A huge organisation of *Gāyatrī*

parivār was formed within no time. An infrastructure of a moral-reawakening movement was built up for basic transformation of thoughts and attitudes of the society through mass moral education. Later, after two decades, *Pragyā sansthāns* and *Svādhyāya maṇḍals* were formed at places where branches had been established after the *Mahāyagya*. A dedicated, wholetime group of workers also emerged from this *yagya*, who later took full and independent charge of the press, publication and publicity at Mathura, after I had shifted to Shantikunj, Haridwar, for good. Thus this *Mahāyagya* and subsequent celebrations throughout the country had played an important role as a background for the selection of volunteers and permanent workers at Shantikunj.

My own organising capacity was further honed and developed. Several camps of one week, nine days and one month were organised in the limited campus of Gayatri Tapobhumi, Mathura. After *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya* and *Śat-kunḍī yagya*, *panckoṣī sādhanā*, *kāyākalpa* and *jīvan sādhanā* camps were organised at Mathura for integrated spiritual upliftment, holistic health and life-long pursuit of self-awakening respectively according to the instructions of *Gurudev*. The love of *parijans* who visited Gayatri Tapobhumi and feelings of mutual intimate relationship with them gave birth to the huge organisation known as *Gāyatrī parivār*. Each member of this *Gāyatrī parivār* turns to me as a father-figure, counsellor, guide and healer in his/her personal and domestic problems.

In response to their affectionate invitations I visited several places from where people had come to Mathura for the *Mahāyagya*. I attended several *yagya* celebrations, seminars and conferences in which several awakened intellectuals participated. When I decided to leave Mathura and shift to Haridwar, I toured almost the entire country for about two years. At Tatanagar, Mahasamund, Bahraich, Bhilwara and Porbandar, huge *Sahastra-kunḍī yagyas* were performed on the same scale at which the *Mahāyagya* at Mathura was performed. I used to visit three places in a day and toured thousands of miles before I left for *agyātvās* (seclusion). As a result of these extensive tours I could lay my hands on several dedicated workers. Innumerable persons who had lived like *Riṣis* in their past births came in my contact. I judged their capacity, enrolled them in the *parivār* and thus a huge organisation was set up.

Gurudev had directed long back that I would have to go to the *Himālayas* again and stay there for six months. I was asked to break my emotional ties

with Mathura, shift to Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar and initiate establishment of *Riṣi* traditions at this place which was once a *tapasthalī*. I had gradually started entrusting my routine responsibilities to my wife. She had been my life-partner in two of the three previous births. During this life also, she has played the role of an inseparable soulmate and companion. In fact, her dedication, devotion and disposition for service has served as the bedrock for all my achievements. She gladly moulded herself according to my wishes and stood firm in all adverse circumstances. My family background was of a rural landlord while she hailed from an urban family. But when the question of merging with each other arose we effortlessly united and became one. I donated my village land for building a school there and the money received from *zamīndārī* bonds was used for purchasing land for Gayatri Tapobhumi. She donated all her ornaments for constructing the building of Gayatri Tapobhumi. Her self-surrender and sacrifice have helped me in achieving exemplary heights in the realms of spiritual growth and service of the society.

During my earlier pilgrimage to the *Himālayas* in the years 1959-60, when I stayed there for about one-and-a-half year, my wife had taken upon herself the responsibility of publication and organising the mission in my absence. Then, after ten years, I again went to the *Himālayas* in 1971 leaving behind a large far-flung spiritual family. *Gāyatrī parivār* needed a patron in visible form who could give them love, guidance and affection. Mother alone can console a child in moments of pain and distress. *Mātājī* (my wife) undertook and ideally discharged this responsibility. Even three years before proceeding on the pilgrimage, I remained on long tours and at that time *Mātājī* used to look after and give solace to *parijans* who visited Mathura. I received her constant cooperation in living a life totally dedicated to the wellbeing and service of society. With a paltry amount of rupees two hundred she used to maintain a family of five persons and extend hospitality to the visitors. Never was anybody sent back disappointed.

The life which we lived at Mathura was like a precious trust on which not only the foundation of the life-transforming mission was laid but persons having strong shoulders were also found who could carry the responsibility on my gradual withdrawal from the visible scene of day-to-day organisational work.

Some mysterious events at Mathura

The activities which I was directed to undertake at Mathura appeared to be difficult in the beginning, according to my knowledge and competence, in

the absence of material and human resources, experience and wisdom. Then how could such a stupendous work be done? When *Gurudev* saw that I was losing courage he took the reins in his hands. Only my body was utilised. The work was done by the puppeteer himself to whose tune I simply danced as a puppet. The only credit that I can claim is that I gladly danced to his tune.

I devoted four hours daily for writing work. It appeared as if the example of Vyas and Ganesh was being repeated, When *Purāṇas* were written, Vyas dictated to Ganesh. The same thing happened with me. The translation of voluminous ancient *Sanskrit* scriptural texts was a difficult task. Like Ganesh, I was used as a mere scribe for translating the four *Vedās*, 108 *Upniṣads*, six *Darśans*, 24 *Smritis*; but the entity who gave dictation was some invisible power. Otherwise, so huge a task could not have been completed within so short a time. Hundreds of books relating to mass education through the agency of moral and spiritual instruction could not have been written on the strength of the talents of one single person. This writing work continues uninterrupted since the day it was started. The weight of my published works almost equals the weight of my body.

For publication a press was needed. With my own limited resources I had somehow managed for a hand press. The one who had to get all this work done through me laughed at my childishness. Miraculously there was steady development of the press and treadles, cylinder, automatic and offset machines were added one after the other. Their cost and those of the publications added upto lakhs of rupees.

On my own human strength, the number of subscribers of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* could reach two thousands only. The Guide then gave a push and the figure has now gone up to one and half lakhs. It is likely to register a tenfold increase in due course of time. In all, about one and half lakh copies of *Yug Nirmaṇ Yojanā* (Hindi), *Yug Śakti Gāyatrī* (Gujarati), *Yug Śakti* (Oriya) are also being published. It is an unprecedented record that magazines wholly written by one person have such a large circulation, without incurring any loss and that too without accepting any advertisement.

With a view to organising *Gāyatrī parivār*, *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya* was performed at Mathura by way of *pūrṇāhuti* of *Mahāpuraścaraṇa*. There is no exaggeration in saying that there has not been any celebration of this scale since *Mahābhārat* times.

Hardly does anybody know about some mysterious occurrences relating to

this celebration. Devoted *Gāyatrī sādhaks*, about four lakh in numbers, were invited from all over the country. They all took over charge of the work of educating the masses through moral and spiritual instruction. All these persons were unknown to me. But invitation letters reached them and they came at their own cost. It remains a riddle and a mystery.

The number of daily visitors and participants in the *yagya* was about ten lakh persons. The latter were all lodged in a number of huge camps covering an area of seven miles. No participant in the *yagya* was sent back without food. We had provisions sufficient only for feeding about twenty thousand people at one time. But the store became inexhaustible. More than five lakh persons were fed in this function, which lasted for five days. Provisions were left over after the celebration which were distributed free of cost to deserving persons. Arrangements were so meticulous that they could not have been made even by engaging a thousand paid employees.

All these are mysterious matters. I have described only the factual aspect of this celebration, but the underlying mystery is confined to me. Nobody could imagine how all these arrangements were made and who was behind these accomplishments. It was all the play of an invisible power. *Riṣis* whom I had met during my first visit to the *Himālayas* were also present in the *yagya* in their astral bodies. People said that it was a miracle wrought by me but the fact is that I was looking at the entire game as a mere spectator, like Jadbharat.

The third work which I had to do at Mathura was construction of Gayatri Tapobhumi. A small building could not have served the needs of such a stupendous programme. Its construction work is still going on even after my leaving Mathura. It has now been extended and developed in the form of Pragya Nagar. Those who have visited Mathura are amazed to see the campus of Gayatri Tapobhumi, its press, arrangements for the stay of visitors and the dedication of the workers. The credit for such a grand campus and its management cannot be given to an individual but to the invisible power which is using me as an instrument. Arjun's chariot was driven by Shri Krishna as his charioteer. It may be said that Arjun and Pandavas fought the *Mahābhārat* war and achieved victory by their own valour, courage and strength but it was not true. They were the same Pandavas in whose presence Draupadi was undraped and they could do nothing. During the period of exile they remained under disguise and worked as mere servants.

My competence is quite insignificant. If anybody wants to take account of my achievements at Mathura, he will have to bear in mind the facts about

my life *sādhanā*. I should not be regarded anything beyond a puppet who surrenders and dances to the tune of its master. This feeling of dedication and surrender is the central theme of the story of my life. I have taught this to all those who come in my contact. I have simply revealed the importance of *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā* and, as for myself, I have been only an instrument of the invisible power.

CHAPTER 7

REVELATION OF THE TECHNIQUE OF SUBLIME TRANSFORMATION: HOW I IMPLEMENTED IT IN MY LIFE

Before I proceed further, it will be appropriate to describe three important phases of my life *sādhanā* which are linked with my spiritual progress. This has been the central point of my successful life journey. If readers of this book are inspired to proceed on this path they should assimilate the philosophy behind the *sādhanā* which I have adopted in my life. Mysterious occult events, no doubt, sound interesting but they are confined only to the person concerned. Hypnotised by such events, if a person performs the same rituals and pays a visit to the *Himālayas* he will get nothing. The most important lesson which my soul has learnt living in this body is true *upāsanā* (worship), correct life *sādhanā* and *arādhanā*, which means service of humanity. This is the path which can transform a person into a divinised

human being, a *Riṣi* or a messenger of God.

A man needs food, clothes and shelter for sustenance. Pen, ink and paper are needed for writing a book. Seed, manure and water are needed for growing a crop. Not one, but all these three are important and none of them can be ignored. For spiritual progress also, coordination of *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā* is needed. All these three are equally important.

Real form of *upāsanā*

The aspect which is secondary and minor e.g. mechanical adoration (*pūjā-pāṭh*) has been wrongly considered to be *upāsanā* (worship). Offerings of some stray materials to the deity and doing certain rituals or overt acts of worship are considered as *pūjā*. To eulogize, extol and chant praises of gods is known as *pāṭh*. Sweets, cocoanut, cardamom etc. are presented and offered to God or the deity as if He lacked such articles and by offering them, He will be overwhelmed with joy. People think that just as a ruler is puffed up on hearing bardic poetry in his praise from a bard, God will fulfil their worldly desires by such adoration (*pūjā-pāṭh*). Such persons are totally ignorant about the true nature of Godhead and consider Him to be a stupid Superperson who could be allured or befooled like a child. They think that God can be coaxed to fulfil their desires, proper or improper, just or unjust. The common man is a victim of this illusion. The so-called *bhaktas* (devotees) beg wealth, success, heaven, liberation, *siddhis* (divine powers) from God. Some people are crazy after seeing God with physical eyes. Amongst persons who are engaged in counting beads or burning incense-sticks, a majority belongs to this category. Some are after a still cheaper formula. They think that simply by seeing idols in the temple or having a *darṣan* of saints they can cajole them to fulfil their ambitions. Such naive beliefs are prevalent in the society.

It should be clearly understood that a really worthwhile thing is bound to cost more. If a person wants to be included in the Central Cabinet, he has to get himself elected as a member of the Parliament. The meaning of *upāsanā* is to sit closeby. It is not like the railway passengers who jostle or push each other to get into the train somehow. It is like two bosom friends who have two bodies with one mind and one soul sitting together. In such intimacy one has to surrender to the other. A devotee (*bhakta*) has to mould his life and surrender himself to the will of God.

Explaining the importance and philosophy of *upāsanā*, which is the first essential pre-requisite for spiritual upliftment, *Gurudev* said, "God cannot dance to your tune. You will have to become his devotee and act according to His will. If you are able to do so, you will become identical with God. Fuel has no worth except when it embraces fire and becomes fire itself. Fire does not become fuel. It is fuel which has to be transformed into fire. A drain meets a river and becomes as purifying and great as the river itself. But it never happens that a river flows in reverse, meets the drain and becomes dirty like it. Iron comes in contact with *pāras*, (the mystical stone which is said to convert iron into gold by mere touch), and turns into gold. It does not become *paras*. It is the *sādhak* who has to dance to the tune of God like a puppet. God does not fulfil the wishes of the *sādhak*. A *sādhak* has to surrender himself to God and fulfil His will. A drop of water merges into and becomes one with the ocean. The ocean does not become a drop. This is the philosophy of *upāsanā*. If a person wants to do *upāsanā*, he has to sit near God, do His will and become His follower."

I had to do the same. I worshipped God, performed *jap* of *Gāyatrī* as *Divine Mother* and meditated upon *Savitā* as *Divine Father*. Throughout, I had only one feeling. Like Shravankumar, I would demand nothing from my Parents but carry them on pilgrimage. I would mould my character in such a way that I may be called a worthy son of worthy Parents.

I did, no doubt, regard *Gāyatrī* as Mother and *Savitā* as Father for the sake of convenience of meditation but knew throughout that they are formless, astral and all-pervading. On account of this conviction I could feel that they pervaded my whole being and there was complete identity of Spirit. If I had regarded God or *Gāyatrī Mātā* as specific persons a distance between us would have been maintained and I had been deprived of that feeling of complete identification.

In the beginning, for the sake of practice, one should regard himself as a creeper and God as a tree. The creeper embraces the tree and reaches the top. It is also convenient to regard one's self as a flute and God as the *Flute Player* to enable him to make his life disciplined and inspired. The meditation about a kite flying high up in the air with its controlling thread in the hands of a child is also helpful. I have followed these three types of meditation from time to time and had rich, enthusing and happy experiences. The sacrifice of the moth on the burning lamp; physical, mental and material surrender of the wife to her husband are instances of experiencing complete identification, unity or oneness with God.

In my *upāsanā*, actions, rituals were not of primary significance. It was suffused with emotional zeal, devotion and faith. I strictly followed the discipline of doing prescribed *jap*. Except for some emergency, rarely was there any omission in getting up in the morning at 1 A.M. and performing the set routine. Deficiency, if any, was made up on the next day and nothing was left in arrears. Even then, I had practised throughout to maintain an attitude full of emotional zeal during my *upāsanā*. In the beginning the practice of arousing feelings of sacrifice, unity, identity and negation of duality was done in the form of imagination. Later it became a part of nature and ultimately culminated in self-realisation.

The power of *Gāyatrī Mātā* started reflecting in the form of devotion (*śraddhā*) in causal body, illumination (*pragyā*) in astral body and determination (*niṣṭhā*) in physical body. Strict self-introspection was done from time to time to ensure that this was no mere wishful thinking. I examined and analysed myself in the light of actual daily events whether or not devotion for leading an idealistic life, for the service of mankind as a whole, had increased and allurement of temptation has been overcome; and found that my feelings had fully matured like those of a *Riṣi-kalpa sādhāk*.

Gāyatrī Mātā manifests as divine energy in feminine form. It took the form of *pragyā* and dominated the mental arena. I tested on several occasions to ascertain whether in the form of *pragyā* there was integration of wisdom, responsibility and fearlessness down to the deepest depths of consciousness. I have been experiencing that *Gāyatrī Mātā* has incarnated in the form of *pragyā* in my inner consciousness and my *upāsanā*, meditation and contemplation have all become fruitful. Whether or not our convictions, our ideologies are reflected in our actions (*karma*), attitudes (*guṇas*), and nature (*svabhāv*) is the real test of *upāsanā*.

The third aspect of *Tripadā Gāyatrī* is *niṣṭhā*. *Niṣṭhā* means firm determination, patience, courage, bravery, devout austerity (*tap*) and endurance. Just as a pot taken out from potter's kiln is thoroughly examined by thrashing and beating it with fingers to find out whether it is half-baked, broken or fully baked and intact, in the same way, I kept on introspecting and observing myself whether there had been any wavering in my firmness in the face of temptations and fear. I found that every step was an advance forward and there was no stagnation in the progress.

The brilliance of *Savitā* is known as *Brahmavarcas*. It is also called *ojas*,

tejas, *varcas*. It is reflected directly in the form of piety, sharpness and brilliance. The inrush of *Savitā's* light in physical, astral and causal sheaths fills the body with strength, the brain with knowledge and the heart with love and courage. Later, I started experiencing that my entire self had become a field of light, a column of fire; and divine nectar was flowing through each and every cell of my body, my entire being. I felt, I was getting the joy of contentment, fulfilment and peace, as if I were drinking *somras* (nectar).

This, in brief, is my regular programme of doing *upāsanā* for four hours daily. This period effortlessly flies without boredom, tiredness, yawning, as if only half an hour has passed. Every moment I feel heavenly joy and closeness to God. This has become a routine. I have no inclination to count, boast or think of rewards or results. Like all other tasks of daily routine, sitting near God (*upāsanā*) is also a natural living routine for me without which I cannot live for a single day. For me doing *upāsanā* for a fixed period daily is a process of recharging myself with spiritual energies which keep me full of divine bliss throughout the day. I spend every moment blissfully experiencing myself in God and God in me.

In such a state of inner consciousness, one takes the ups and downs of life in one's stride. There is neither joy nor sorrow. An undulating ocean of bliss appears all around.

Wherever I look, I see God. He walks beside me wherever I go. I feel His Presence every moment like a guardian angel, like a pilot. An ocean cannot become a drop but there is no doubt about a drop becoming an ocean by merging its identity in the ocean. An attitude of carefreeness and fearlessness spontaneously grows with the awareness of God's constant presence.

I have cherished firm faith (*śraddhā*) in the Divine throughout my life, which has helped my soul in getting united with God. It is revealing and manifesting itself in the form of actual *Bhagvati* (Mother aspect of Divinity).

Never-failing *sādhanā*

Man has his own limitations like a child. He potentially gets infinite strength from his Creator, the Omnipotent God. This, however, is conditional. Children do not know proper utility of objects and cannot take care of them. So they are given cheap toys, petty balloons, rattles, whistles, lemon juice, toffees etc. When a child grows up, understands his responsibilities he gets everything in inheritance without demanding anything. For this he is not required to beg, beseech pathetically or offer prayers. God and divinised

human beings are keen to give a thousand times more than what we ask for, provided we have demonstrated our competence to utilise the divine gifts for noble and altruistic purposes and not for gratification of our perversely petty, egoistic desires and hungers.

It does not serve any purpose to give false assurances for the future. Proof has to be furnished how, whatever has been given so far, has been utilised. This is the basis of preparing the history sheet which is examined before promotion is granted. I had to give convincing proof of my competence and sincerity during past several births. When everything was found to be in order, gifts and grace were showered on me.

Whatever Sugreev, Vibhishan, Sudama, Arjun got and whatever they did was not the result of their own ego-centred efforts. The supreme power of God was working behind. Canals get water from rivers. Distributaries which supply water to the fields get it from the canals. If there is any disorder or mishap anywhere there is bound to be a breakdown in the entire chain. Man can establish intimate relationship with God on some definite basis. There is no scope in it for anything like flattery. God does not play favourite with anyone. He is bound by the laws underlying the smooth working of His cosmos. He is impartial.

My personal competence is almost insignificant. Whatever has been accomplished should purely be considered the result of Divine Grace, most of which is being showered not directly but through the medium of my *Gurudev*, although it hardly makes any difference.

How could this sublime achievement be possible ? It was possible by cultivation of competence or worthiness. It is also known as *Jīvan- sādhanā*. It is intimately related to *upāsanā*. Electric current flows through a metal wire and not through wood. A dry log of wood burns far more quickly and brightly than a wet one. A mother takes up a child into her lap when he is neat and clean. If he is stained with filth and dirt, she will first wash and clean him and then take him in her lap and feed him. For securing nearness, proximity to God, purity of character is a must. Several persons had remained soiled with carnal cravings in their previous lives but the moment they took to faith, devotion and *sādhanā* their lives were transformed beyond recognition. Valmiki, Angulimal, Bilva-mangal, Ajamil became saints in the true sense of the term, the moment they surrendered themselves to God, although their past lives were far from pious. We adopt the policy of *Rām nām japanā parāyā māl apanā* (mechanically taking Ram's name but coveting what belongs to others). We go on doing evil deeds and yet think

that by worshipping God merely through outward symbolic acts, we will escape from retribution for our trespasses. Is this not a great delusion?

Before dyeing, a cloth has to be washed. Before sowing it is necessary to plough the land. To earn the grace of God one has to lead a pious life and become a *sādhak*. A *sādhak* alone can become a true devotee. In the absence of *jīvan- sādhanā* the thoughts, character, diet and daily routine of a person will all be disorganised. Such a person will always remain restless on account of greed and desires and he will never be able to concentrate his mind. No purpose is served merely by performing *karma-kāṇḍ* and symbolic worship. Worship is directly related to inner feelings. With such sublimated feelings alone a person is able to assimilate righteousness in his attitudes, actions and nature.

When a respectable guest pays a visit or there is a function, the entire house is cleaned and white-washed. If God is to be invited to occupy the chamber of the heart, it has to be first cleaned of all the dirt and dross which fill it. For this one has to take recourse to self-introspection, self-purification, self-transformation and self-growth. These facts were explained to me and I thoroughly assimilated them. After all, why do we lead a contemptible life? Greed, delusion and pride, these three are at its root. A man having these vices is bound to be dragged towards hell.

Actions are shaped by our subtle tendencies. Our physical body is governed by our mind. Mind alone and not the body should be considered responsible for all the misdeeds. Keeping this fact in view, I considered it appropriate to cut the root of the poisonous tree and started *Jīvan- sādhanā*, considering mind as the basis.

Crimes are often committed due to economic compulsions and temptation. A pledge was, therefore, taken by me to lead a simple life of an average Indian. Whatever the income, it should be spent economically, according to local conditions, on the principle of 'simple living and high thinking'. In principle, most of the people give it lip support, but when it comes to practice they find it difficult to do so. It requires unshakable firmness and resolve, as members of the family have also to be prepared to follow it strictly, not only in principle but also in practice.

The greatest difficulty in this connection is about the attitudes prevalent in the society. People think that when everybody is indulging in riotous merry-making on his well-earned or ill-gotten wealth, why should we exercise control on ourselves? It is very difficult to convince members of the family

in this matter. Still, if we practise what we preach and try to convince people by logic, facts and results and our resolve is firm, it is well nigh impossible that persons close to us will not be influenced. If economic malpractices are sought to be eradicated, it is necessary to educate the minds of the people on these lines. With this belief I remained firm in my convictions. Our family in Ghiya Mandi, Mathura, consisted of five members. Till we came to Haridwar in 1971, we managed our expenses within two hundred rupees per month. This could be possible by thrift and by maintaining a standard different from others, although my income was above average as I had inherited ancestral property. It was also spent in the education of children of other members of the family and nothing was accumulated to breed vices and addictions. Thus an important aspect of *jīvan- sādhanā* could be practised.

A man has a propensity for adorning, embellishing and enriching one's own family and he wants to leave huge wealth in succession at the time of his death. Children of the people who indulge in unrestrained gratification of desires are bound to become addicted to luxuries of all sorts and thus a chain of extravagance and squandering of money starts. Ill-gotten wealth is bound to be spent in licentious living. I learnt a lesson from the experience of the downfall of others and did not allow such an outlook to enter in my home. Thus a cultured, refined family grew up.

People squander away a lot of money and time in bragging, pomp and show, ornamentation and fashion. There was no scope in my life for such ego-inflating and self-glorifying trivialities, as an atmosphere of *brāhmaṇa-like* politeness and simplicity was maintained throughout my personal and family life. We had formed the habit of doing all domestic chores with our own hands. For years *Mātājī* grinded flour at home and prepared meals herself for the family and guests. A domestic servant had to be engaged only when, on account of extraordinary expansion of *mission's* work, it became difficult for her to spare time for household work.

It is a false notion, born out of a perverted sense of values, that those living in pomp and show are regarded 'great' while those living in simplicity are considered to be unlucky or backward. It did not ever apply in my case. It would have been a different matter if poverty had become our lot on account of sloth or incompetence. But in our case it was a voluntarily and gladly adopted way of life in adherence to high and noble ethical principles. None of my relatives, friends etc. who came in my contact regarded it as poverty but as an example of setting *brāhmaṇa* traditions. There are people who by

giving up chillies or putting on wooden sandals make loud proclamations of their simplicity and righteousness. But spiritual life is truly lived by an all-inclusive self-restraint and discipline in which one has to consciously endeavour every moment to transform his entire way of life into that of a true *brāhmaṇa*. This entails a gradual and long *sādhanā*. In this respect, I rigorously trained myself and also all those who were linked with me.

Life is affected by accumulated evil tendencies and habits. Passion, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy, all tried to deflect me from the righteous path, but they were chased away before they could establish a foothold in my psyche. They succeed only when a person is caught unawares or lowers his guard. I kept a constant watch on my attitudes (*guṇa*), actions (*karma*) and nature (*svabhāv*) with a view to ensuring that righteousness of a *sādhak* has been incorporated in them. It is a matter of satisfaction that I can humbly claim to have emerged victorious.

At birth, everybody is crude and unpolished. Every soul brings with it, from previous lives, more or less load of evil tendencies and impressions. They are not eradicated all of a sudden. Grace of the *Guru* or *pūjā-pāṭh* (rituals) also does not serve this purpose. The only way is to struggle hard against the evil tendencies. A parallel army of noble thoughts, duly trained, should be kept in readiness to fight it out as soon as an evil thought creeps in. Evil thoughts and tendencies cannot exist for long if they are not allowed to consolidate their position in our minds. Their strength is limited. They mainly depend on habits and conventions, while good thoughts have always the strong support of logic, facts, proof, wisdom etc. The authors of ancient scriptures have rightly pointed out that ultimately truth alone prevails. In other words, it is the divine virtues and noble tendencies that form part of our real higher nature; evil tendencies are only aberrations and shadows without substance. When monkeys and bears can be trained to display amazing feats, there is no reason why a raw and crude mind could not be refined and made righteous through concentrated *sādhanā*.

Arādhanā that was uninterruptedly pursued

The confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati is known as *triveṇī*. It is said that one who takes bath in it is rejuvenated. Although a heron cannot become a swan, a crow cannot become a cuckoo, it is certain that the inner and outer life of a man can be totally transformed by the confluence of triple currents of *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā*. These are not rituals to be performed in a particular manner or at a particular time but are instruments

for bringing about high level transformations in man's thinking, character and behaviour. For this it is necessary to keep a constant watch on one's physical and mental activities. Vigilance has to be exercised to eradicate vices. High idealism has to be incorporated in our attitudes, actions and nature to restrain them, just as wild animals and birds are trained to display skilful feats in a circus. *Upāsanā* (worship) can be done for a short time but *sādhanā* has to be done constantly, just as an infant has to be watched continuously. Only an *upāsanā* which is coupled with *sādhanā* becomes fruitful. Those who consider *pūjā* (*upāsanā*) a mere jugglery and indulge in day-dreaming to attain *riddhis-siddhis* by performing this or that ritual are totally under a delusion.

Gurudev had on the very first day clearly indicated to me the mode of *Tripadā Gāyatrī* in the form of *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā*. He pointed out that along with regular *jap* and meditation, there should be permeation of *upāsanā* in *sādhak*'*s* thinking and feelings, *sādhanā* in his character and *arādhanā* in his social behaviour, with faith and alertness. I have so far implicitly complied with these instructions and the results achieved thereby are there for all to see.

Arādhanā means remaining engrossed in doing work for public weal. *Jīvan-sādhanā* is a *sādhanā* of self-restraint (*sanyam*) in which maximum is saved and minimum is spent on one's own sustenance. Only that much time, labour, money and talents are used on one's own person and family which could ensure a simple, dignified life of the standard of an average citizen. Measured against this criterion, a hard working and educated person should be in a position to save something after meeting his essential needs. Best utilisation of this saving is known as *arādhanā*. Ordinarily, people mis-spend this saving on themselves or members of their families because it does not occur to them that there are other persons also in this world who have their own needs. If their outlook had been altruistic, they would have utilised their savings in works of public good and fulfilled the needs of the times.

God is conceived as '*Sākār*' (with form) for the purpose of meditation according to one's liking and belief and it resembles a human figure. This conception is definitely essential and useful, but it has to be borne in mind that it is imaginary and not real. God is one and cannot have so many forms as have been visualised by various religions and sects. The utility of form should be kept confined to practising concentration of mind. The principle underlying idol worship is that effort should be made to understand, visualise

and assimilate the *Invisible God* through the medium of a visible symbol.

The omnipotent God can only be '*Nirākār*' (formless). God is known as *Parmātmā* which means that which includes and exceeds all living beings (*Jīvātmās*). It is *Virāt-Brahma* or *Virāt-Viśva*. Shri Krishna had shown a vision of this cosmic or universal God to Arjun and Yashoda. Kaushalya and Kakbhusundi had also seen a glimpse of God in the form of entire universe. According to this conception public service becomes *arādhanā* of *Virāt-Brahma*. Man has been sent by God as his prince and has been endowed with a precious life to make this universe, a garden of God, happy and prosperous. The significance of human life lies in fulfilment of this aim which is known as *arādhanā*.

I have been doing this. Out of the twelve hours of night, four hours were spent regularly in *upāsanā* and the rest in sleep and other daily routine. If a person is lazy and careless, his whole time is spent haphazardly and in a disorganised way, but if he girds up his loins, remains vigilant, marvellous works can be accomplished. During twelve hours of the day, leaving two hours for food, rest and other routine, a net period of ten hours remains in hand. I have been using this period of the day regularly in doing work for the welfare of the people. These activities of *arādhanā* can be classified as under :-

(1) Writing and publication of magazines, books, literature etc. for refinement of the minds and attitudes of the people in accordance with the ideals of *Yug-cetnā*.

(2) To inspire and provide guidance to truly aspiring souls to adopt a way of life in accordance with *Yug-dharma* (needs of the Time Spirit);

(3) To give advice to those who have turned to me for guidance and counselling for elevating their souls to enable them to overcome their personal difficulties and build a happy future based on high principles.

Innumerable persons came in my contact and a majority of them were changed, enlightened and benefited. It is not possible to describe the events and mention the names of such persons since it is not my habit to do so. Moreover, it will become a voluminous book even if only certain events which I still remember are reduced into writing. But the persons concerned may object to it. The practice of expressing gratitude is almost extinct now. It will, therefore, not be proper on my part to say anything about these events. Besides, by disclosing the bounty of good deeds, the efficacy of the virtue gets diminished.

There is, however, no doubt that these services have been very effective. Uptill now (1989), more than twenty-four lakh persons are associated with *Pragyā parivār*. However the number of those who have been deeply influenced by the principles and ideals of the mission would be around one-third. Majority of them consists of those persons who have received enlightenment, affection, help, advice and divine gifts from me in their personal life. They had come rushing to me greatly worried and afflicted with grave problems and returned with solace and peace. This is the reason that such a large family has been built up. If it was all based on mere ideology and principles, the membership of *Gāyatrī parivār* would have remained limited like *Ārya samāj* and *Sarvodaya samāj* and the atmosphere of personal intimacy and cordiality would not have been established. There had been much pressure on *Mātājī* on account of rush of visitors, their arrival at odd times and in making arrangements for their stay, food etc. Despite all these inconveniences we have been amply rewarded by the affection and love which we have earned in return. All that we have done for the people is being repaid with interest in the form of this affection and love. Thus it cannot be said to be a losing proposition.

Capital is needed for *arādhanā* (public service). How can a person who is hungry himself distribute food to others? Wherefrom would this capital come? *Gurudev* had told me on the very first day of my meeting with him, "Whatever you possess, learn to sow it in the form of seed in the field of Supreme God, the *Virāt Brahma*." On sowing, one grain is bound to multiply hundred times. *Gurudev* quoted the instance of Jalaram Bapa who was a cultivator. He used to spend all his savings in feeding the needy. God was extremely pleased with him and gave him such a perennial bag, the contents of which never got exhausted. Free kitchen which he started is still working at Virpur, a village in Gujarat in which thousands of devoted people take food every day. A person who invests his money for public weal gets ready and glad cooperation. However, a person who accumulates, keeps his money unused and goes on amassing more and more is always cursed and ridiculed by the people.

Under *Gurudev's* direction, I decided to surrender my all viz. (1) competence to do physical labour; (2) capacity to do mental work; (3) sentiments and feelings and (4) ancestral property, at the feet of God. There was nothing self-earned. I applied all the aforesaid four-fold wealth with deep faith and devotion for specific purposes and the return was hundred times more. I did physical work for twelve hours daily and never got tired. My efficiency on

the other hand went on increasing. Even at this old age, I have the capacity to work as hard as a young man. Both mental and physical work were done side by side and old age has never adversely affected my work and morale.

I have immensely loved people and have been in return profusely loved by them. Besides getting personal affection, respect and goodwill, people whole-heartedly responded to my appeals for working for this mission. An outstanding example of this is construction of 2400 *Pragyāpīṭhas* within a short period of two years. In the beginning, I started with my own money. Gayatri Tapobhumi was built with the money, I got by disposing of my ancestral property. In my place of birth, a high school was built. Later, a *Śaktipīṭha* was also constructed there. I had little hope that people will give so much without expecting anything in return. The complex of Gayatri Tapobhumi, Mathura, Shantikunj, Gayatri Teerth and Brahmavarchas Research Institute at Haridwar are examples of the fact that on being sown, a seed multiplies by hundred times. Due to lack of faith people conceal what they have in their possession, beg for donations and pray God that they may win a lottery. If a beginning is made with complete self-surrender, the result is bound to be astonishing. A devotee who built the *Śaktipīṭha* (Gayatri temple) at Junagarh (Gujarat) made a beginning by selling his utensils. It is pre-eminent amongst all the *Śaktipīṭhas* which have been built so far.

A grain of bajra or maize on being sown ripens and multiplies into hundred grains. This has actually happened with me when I sacrificed all I had. Members of the family should be maintained as long as they are not able to earn their livelihood. To go on spending money, labour and intelligence on able-bodied and earning family members and die leaving property in inheritance for them is immoral and I have always opposed it. Money which comes unearned or ‘gratis’ is ill-gotten although it may be ancestral. Having kept complete faith in this ideal, I did not allow my wealth in the form of physical and mental labour, emotional feelings and accumulated savings to pass on to the hands of undeserving persons. It was totally applied in *arādhanā* of God, towards the growth of nobility and goodness in society. The result is self-evident. If like a miser, I had used all my resources in self-gratification, hoarding or in spending on members of the family to make them multi-millionaire, it would all have been wasted.

One has to wait for the next birth for getting results of certain virtuous deeds, righteous actions. Public service, however, is such a universal good whose reward one gets instantly. We feel deep soul satisfaction in consoling

others in the moment of their despair. There is a divine rule that the store of a benefactor never becomes empty. God's grace always blesses him and whatever has been spent comes back multiplied manifold.

Sheep parts with its wool but it gets new wool every year. Trees yield fruits but their branches again get loaded with fresh fruits every season. Clouds go on raining but they never get emptied as they go on collecting water from the ocean. The coffers of magnanimous persons never get empty. It is a different matter if a person donates his time, labour and resources to undeserving persons and blindly encourages evil tendencies and considers it to be a righteous deed. Otherwise, public service is bound to be instantly rewarded. Whosoever invests in this enterprise is bound to be rewarded by soul-satisfaction, public respect and divine grace. Misers are those who foolishly boast of their shrewdness and cleverness but great is their loss in the ultimate analysis.

Public service loses its significance when in return a man expects to get name and fame. It then becomes a business like publication of an advertisement in the papers. If a person is reminded of the favour done or something is expected in return, the efficacy of virtuousness is lost. Donations given under pressure do not fulfil the true aims of a charitable purpose. The criterion is whether by such an act there is growth of kindly feelings and spread of righteous tendencies. These days innumerable ostentations and hypocrisies are in vogue which promote the growth of social parasites who exploit simple people by fraudulent and deceitful means. Before spending any money a man should think a thousand times what its ultimate use will be. It is absolutely necessary these days to exercise such far-sighted wisdom. On such occasions I have declined to oblige and have even dared to incur the ignomy of being dubbed as inconsiderate.

One can have a glimpse of the philosophy of my life in these three aspects of *upāsanā*, *sādhanā* and *arādhanā. This* is the path which has been followed by all the great ones who have achieved their goals and earned fame. There is no short-cut on this path.

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CHAPTER 8

THIRD PILGRIMAGE TO THE *HIMĀLAYAS* – SOWING THE SEEDS OF *RIṢI* TRADITIONS

After the work at Mathura had been stabilised on a satisfactory footing, I received the third call from the *Himālayas* in which there was indication about the next phase of the assignment to be given to me. There had been considerable pressure in the continuing phase of work which had resulted in exhaustion, although success had been achieved. Under these circumstances, this invitation for recharging the battery was most welcome.

I set out for the pilgrimage on the prescribed day in June 1971. There was no difficulty as I was familiar with the route. The cold was also not as severe as it was at the time of my first pilgrimage. I also did not feel loneliness. I was escorted by *Gurudev's* messenger from Gomukh to Nandanvan, as usual. The auspicious moment to which I was keenly looking forward throughout the journey ultimately arrived. After exchange of reverent courtesies and blessings, the impartation of guidance started.

Gurudev said, "You have to leave Mathura and shift to Haridwar and start the work of reviving the *Riṣi* traditions. You will recall that when you came here for the first time you had met *Riṣis* living in this region in their astral bodies and each of them had expressed distress at the extinction of their traditions and you had promised that you would accomplish this task. This time you have been summoned for this purpose.

"God has no physical form. Whenever something epoch-making is sought to be achieved, *Riṣis*, who remain engrossed in *tapaścaryā* bestow their powers on *Devātmās*, great personages and get the work done through them. Vishwamitra took *Bhagvān* Ram to his *Āśram* (hermitage) on the pretext of defending his *yagya*, trained him in *Balā* (*Gāyatrī*) and *Atibalā* (*Sāvitrī*) *vidyās* (spiritual knowledge) and got the citadel of demoniac forces

demolished, thus paving the way for the establishment of *Rām-rājya* (rule of truth and righteousness). Shri Krishna had gone for studies to Sandipan *Riṣi* and returned after he had been duly imparted the message of the *Gītā*, his role in *Mahābhārat* epoch and in carrying forward the *Riṣi* tradition of Sudama. Ancient scriptures are full of descriptions how *Riṣis* moulded great personages and got important work accomplished through them, although they themselves always remained engrossed in spiritual pursuits, *sādhanā*, research etc. It is this work which you have to accomplish.

"The seer of *Gāyatrī mantra* was Vishwamitra who had lived in Sapta Sarovar, Haridwar and had acquired mastery in the miraculous power of *Gāyatrī*. That place is now reserved for you. You will be able to find it out easily. Name it as Shantikunj, *Gāyatrī Tīrtha* and sow the seeds of all the life transforming traditions which were established by the *Riṣis* when they lived in their physical forms. They need a physical medium to get their work done. I, too, had felt a similar need, found in you a competent person, contacted you and initiated you in this task. These other *Riṣis* have also similar aspirations. You have to sow anew the seeds of old *Riṣi* traditions, which is no doubt a difficult task but you will be getting patronage, blessings and divine gifts of executing competence from me as well as from all these *Riṣis* and you will proceed in carrying out the given assignments undeterred."

Briefly describing the still incomplete work of the *Riṣis*, I was asked to acquaint people with the power of *Gāyatrī Mahāmantra* according to the tradition of Vishvamitra *Riṣi* and to establish a *Siddhapīṭha Gāyatrī Tīrtha*; to write books and eighteen volumes of *Pragyā Purāṇ* in Vyas tradition; to extend the science and philosophy of *yog-sādhanā* in Patanjali tradition; to build up an atmosphere of refined and ennobling vibrations by eradicating evil tendencies from the minds of the people according to Parashuram tradition; to conduct scientific research and popularise use of medicinal herbs according to Charak tradition; to heal and set right mental disorders by holistic treatments of *yagyopathy* in Yagyavalkya tradition; to establish *Sādhanā*-*Āraṇyaks* for promoting the growth of goodness and character building in Jamadagni tradition; to lead wandering life of a religious mendicant (*parivrājak*) with the aim of imparting true knowledge and guidance for the spread of religious and spiritual consciousness in Narada tradition; to provide guidance through the medium of ethics to the administrative set-up in the tradition of Aryabhatta; to build up *Pragyā sansthāns* at different places in Shankaracharya tradition; to promote all-round health with the help of proper dieting (*āhār*-*kalpa*) according to Pippalada tradition and to convene *Pragyā sammelans* from place to place

for educating the masses according to Soot-Shounik tradition. *Gurudev* also indicated the outline of establishing Brahmavarchas Research Institute for conducting research on scientific lines according to the scientific traditions of *Atharv Veda*, as was done by Kanada *Riṣi*.

I was explained, in detail, what I had to do at Haridwar and how difficulties coming in my way were to be resolved. I assimilated each and every word uttered by *Gurudev*. Last time when I had visited the *Himālayas*, I was to act according to the directions given by *Gurudev* alone. This time I was assigned the onerous responsibilities of undertaking additional momentous tasks. This poor donkey was to be more alert and more diligent. Without elaborating, *Gurudev* simply gave a hint that after doing all this, I will have to pay a fourth visit to the *Himālayas* and shoulder still greater responsibilities and take steps to withdraw into the astral body.

I was informed that the work at Haridwar would be more difficult than that at Mathura. The onslaughts of devilish elements would have to be faced more resolutely and there would be several ups and downs. After explaining where and how I had to live and perform my daily routine, I was told that I should regard it as a joint programme of *Gurudev* and all the other *Riṣis*. I assured *Gurudev* that for me he was the representative of the Supreme Lord and all the *Riṣis* and *Devtās*; and all his instructions would be complied with till my last breath.

Our talks ended. After bidding farewell, *Gurudev* disappeared. I was escorted upto Gomukh by his *Vīrbhadra*. It is not necessary to mention the places where I was required to stay for about a year as they are inaccessible places in the *Himālayas*.

While returning, I stayed at the place indicated by *Gurudev* in Haridwar. It was the *tapobhūmi* of *Sapta-Riṣis*, which was lying deserted and was for sale. It was marshy. Ganga used to flow through this land in the past. I liked it. The owner of the land was contacted, the deal was struck and reduced into writing. I had to take the decision all by myself. The counsel of the advisors was of no avail, as I failed to make them understand the mystical significance of the place, the purpose for which it was being acquired and the blue-print of the proposed construction. Even the supervisory work of construction had to be done by me. Thus came into being the Shantikunj *Śaktipīṭha* at Haridwar.

Establishment of *Gāyatrī Tīrtha* in Shantikunj, Haridwar

I returned from the *Himālayas* in 1972 to Haridwar where I had already got a small building named Shantikunj built earlier. It was sufficient for the stay of *Mātājī* and *devkanyās* who were living with her. More land was purchased and construction work was started. The idea was to develop it into a *Riṣi Āśram*. In the beginning living accommodation for myself, my colleagues and guests along with a kitchen, was built.

This *Āśram* symbolises *Devātmā Himālaya* and hence symbolic temples of Ganga, Uttrakhand and seven *Riṣis*, other important *Riṣis* were built here. Within two years the temple of *Ādya-śakti Gāyatrī*, wells and the meeting hall were also built and Shantikunj was turned into a *tapasthalī* (a centre for spiritual pursuits). A small room for installing the idol of *Gāyatrī Mātā* and the *Akhaṇḍ Dīp* had already been built earlier.

Twenty-four *puraścaraṇas* of twenty-four lakhs each were to be performed to awaken the dormant energy (*sanskārs*) of this land which was lying barren since long. In the beginning nine virgin girls performed *jap* for four hours in the day and four hours in the night. Later, the number of these girls was increased to 27. They were all trained and taught by *Mātājī* and after a period of six years they all attained the standards of graduation and post-graduation. All these girls were suitably married between the ages of twenty to twenty-five years. Earlier, all these girls, numbering more than hundred, were trained in music and in delivering religious discourses and were sent throughout the country in batches of five for spreading the message of the *mission*, especially in awakening of women all over the country.

The work of moulding and preparing vibrant and brilliant workers was taken in hand at Haridwar and for this *Prāṇ pratyāvartan* camps, *Yug-shilpī* camps, *Vānprastha* camps of the duration of one month each were organised. The holy atmosphere of Shantikunj situated on the banks of the holy Ganga in the lap of the *Himālayas* surcharged with spiritual vibrations attracted and inspired hundreds of persons who participated in the series of small and big *Gāyatrī-puraścaraṇas* which were started here for general category of *sādhaks*. Side by side, the training of self-sacrificing *vānprasthīs*, who had dedicated their entire life in the service of this *mission*, also continued. All these *sādhaks* were supplied with free food. The number of such *sādhaks* continued steadily increasing. The services of such self-sacrificing, devout, full-time *sādhaks* who were in conscious process of spiritual awakening were needed to revive *Riṣi* traditions by engaging them in the spread of this momentous *missionary* task.

Two hundred and fifty quarters were built in Gayatri Nagar. A big hall to

accommodate about a thousand persons to listen to spiritual discourses and a *yagyaśālā* with nine *kuṇḍs* were also built. *Yagya* is performed at Shantikunj in the morning for two hours to promote piety. It was so planned that the permanent residents of the *Āśram* and the visitors participating in *puraścaraṇas* may jointly perform a *puraścaraṇa* of twenty-four lakh *jap* daily. A small press was also installed for urgent work. In the meantime the construction of the grand building of Brahmavarchas Research Institute was taken in hand. The completion of all these works took about four years. In the meantime other works which were necessary for the revival of *Riṣi* traditions were also taken in hand according to feasibility.

Bhagvān Buddha had organised *vihārs* at Nalanda and Taxila as great and world-renowned centres of higher learning and teaching, where inmates were trained and deputed for delivering spiritual discourses throughout the country and also in foreign countries. *Bhagv³n* Adya Shankaracharya had established four *dhāms* in the four corners of the country and he had tried to unite and co-ordinate different schools of philosophy and paths of spiritual *sādhanā* which were then prevalent in the country. Both of them had initiated organisation of huge conferences and seminars of *Kumbha* dimensions so that important messages of the *Riṣis* could be conveyed far and wide through the participants. Both these activities were taken in hand. It was decided to build and set up temples and working centres in the form of *Gāyatrī Śaktipīṭhas* and *Pragyā sansthāns* throughout the country to spread the activities and message of the *Pragyā mission* in the surrounding area.

Although it appeared to be a difficult task, inspired and devoted persons took a pledge and within a short period of two years 2400 *Śaktipīṭha* buildings were erected which are being used as centres for spreading the light and message of *Yug-cetnā* from house to house. This work is so vast and marvellous that even the work done by Christian missionaries stands no comparison with it. Churches, temples and other institutions are built by huge donations but our temples have been built by small contributions made by devotees.

A campaign for running mobile *Pragyāpīṭhas* was also launched. These are run by one worker in a mobile push vehicle in his own city or town and also in the surrounding areas. Besides books, other articles are also kept in it. Within a period of two years, about twelve thousand such mobile *Pragyāpīṭhas* were brought in operation. About one lakh persons are being contacted and inspired every day by these permanent and mobile *Pragyāpīṭhas*.

It was further arranged to celebrate four-day annual functions of all these branches in which at least a thousand persons could participate. A team of four musicians and one speaker was deputed in such celebrations from Haridwar to convey New Year's message to the concerned centre. Jeeps were arranged for this purpose so that the luggage of the workers, musical instruments, loud-speakers etc. could also be taken along with them. The driver of the jeep is a trained *mission* worker. Every worker is now being trained in the skill of driving so that there may not be any difficulty in this respect.

Most of the important literature had already been published while I was living at Mathura. After shifting to Haridwar, it was decided to write eighteen volumes of *Pragyā Purāṇa* in *Sanskrit,* along with commentary and illustrations and one folder of eight pages daily to acquaint the people with the methods of working of all the *Riṣis*. Four volumes of *Pragyā Purāṇa* have already been published. Four hundred folders have also been written. Most of them have been published in Hindi and other important languages.

In order to make arrangements for the spread of the message in all important languages and prepare trained workers in every region, a school of languages and religious instructions has been started in Shantikunj and it has already started working satisfactorily.

The volunteers of this *mission* undertake countrywide tours and inspire about ten lakh devotees of the *mission*. The *mission*'*s* network has been firmly established in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa and Maharashtra. Attempts are being made to extend the field of operation and publicity, within about four years time, to the remaining regions of the country which could not be touched so far due to language problems.

Indian migrants numbering nearly three crores are staying abroad in about seventy-four foreign countries. A successful scheme has been launched to spread the ideology of the *mission* amongst these migrants as well as foreigners. It will be possible, in the near future, to spread the light and message of the *mission* through capable workers in several foreign countries. There is hardly any country inhabited by Indian migrants where a centre/ branch of this *mission* has not been set up.

In order to vigorously extend *Riṣi* traditions, about a thousand self-sacrificing workers are constantly engaged in this work. For this, a *Gurukul Āraṇyak* in the tradition of *Riṣi* Jamadagni works regularly at Shantikunj.

In reviving Charak tradition, a garden of rare medicinal herbs has been developed in Shantikunj and research is being conducted with the help of valuable scientific instruments. The theory of treatment by only one medicine at a time is being followed here and the same has proved very efficacious.

Thousands of persons have been trained so far in light music through *Yug-śilpī vidyālaya* at Shantikunj and such trained persons are running schools and preparing persons in *Yug-sangīt* in their respective areas.

The earth is influenced by inter-planetary atmosphere. Information about this is of great importance. It becomes necessary to rectify deviations in astronomical arithmetic after every five thousand years. To revive this science of Aryabhatta, an observatory (*Vedhśālā*) on the lines of ancient instruments has been built in Gayatri Nagar and planetary observations, including those of Neptune, Plato, Uranus are made and an almanac, unique of its kind, is published from here every year.

A new project of mass moral education through audio-visual media has been taken in hand. Earlier, slide projectors were sent to all the branches of the *mission*. Now the medium of video is being utilised. Inspiring films on the basis of music, poems etc. and discourses of eminent persons are being prepared and projected through the medium of video sets. A grand scheme of preparing a film to explain the objects, nature and benefits of the programmes of this *mission* is being taken in hand and is going to materialise shortly.

The greatest creation of this *mission* is the Brahmavarchas Research Institute. A laboratory consisting of several valuable scientific instruments and apparatus has been set up here to conduct research on synthesis of science and spirituality. It is being manned by workers who are graduates and post-graduates in medical science, *Ayurved* etc. and other branches of modern sciences and who are also spiritually oriented. Research is being conducted specifically in the science of *yagya*. Its results have been found to be encouraging with regard to its healing impact on physical and mental diseases, on animals and vegetation and in refining environment and atmosphere.

The health of all the participants attending various camps at Shantikunj is examined and they are advised to do *sādhanā* accordingly. This is a unique research laboratory, first of its kind in the whole world. People are given inspiration and training in different branches. Other more important projects are going to be taken up in future.

Millions of people of *Gāyatrī parivār*, while going for pilgrimage to Uttarakhand, begin their pilgrimage by paying a visit to Shantikunj and by applying its dust on their foreheads. Considering it a *Śaktipīṭhas* (a dynamo for generation of spiritual power), they visit Shantikunj and get *anna-prāśan*, *nāmkaraṇ*, *muṇḍan* and *yagyopavīt* ceremonies of their children performed here. Arrangements have also been made to perform *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇ* rituals of *pitras* (deceased ancestors). People come here in large numbers to celebrate their birthdays and marriage anniversaries. A large number of *parijans* come to Shantikunj, Haridwar and Tapobhumi Mathura to get marriages of their sons and daughters solemnised here as per vedic rites and without incurring avoidable expenses on dowry, receptions, pomp and show and outmoded customs.

While I was entrusted with the task of reviving the work of ancient *Riṣis*, I was in a dilemma, as taking up so stupendous a work in hand needed not only vast sums of money but also committed workers of high moral and spiritual calibre. All other institutions have paid employees. But those who are working in Shantikunj and Brahmavarchas Research Institute are persons who have come after voluntarily resigning their highly lucrative technical posts. Some of them take meals in Shantikunj kitchen, some pay its cost from the interest of their bank deposits, while some are maintaining themselves on their pension. Several persons swayed by emotions come to join but only those who understand the fundamental objectives of the *mission* and the ideology of its founder are able to stick and stay here permanently. It is gratifying to note that more and more sincere and devoted persons are getting continuously linked with this *mission*.

One will hardly find another instance where so many persons would be working for a mission day and night as volunteers without taking a single paisa for their maintenance. Only Shantikunj is lucky in this respect, where highly qualified persons with undergraduate, post-graduate and doctorate degrees in humanities, science, medical science, *Ayurved*, *Sanskrit* etc. are working as volunteers. Hardly can one find such humility, service-mindedness, industriousness and devotion elsewhere as is found in these dedicated, efficient and intelligent workers.

There has been no occasion to ask for donations from any one for undertaking all these works. The *mantra* given by Malviyaji about collecting handful of grain and ten paisa daily has worked this miracle. This work is bound to go on extending. A full-fledged high school and an intermediate college and a hospital are functioning at my birth place which I left long back. The work

at Mathura has increased almost four times after I left it. Slowly and steadily other competent persons have started shouldering my responsibilities. I am confident that this work will go on increasing as time passes. It is the work of *Riṣis* which will go on spreading like *Matsyāvatār* in this era of incarnation of *Pragyāvatār*. I may or may not choose to remain in this physical frame for long but my invisible astral self will go on accomplishing all the work which *Riṣis* have entrusted to me.

The *mantra* '*As you sow, so shall you reap*' which I followed all my life:

When, after returning from the *Himālayas* to Haridwar, an outline of the structure of Shantikunj *Āśram* was prepared, resources were needed for its establishment and expansion. It needed material resources, persons and heroic efforts to struggle hard against the challenges of the critical times. I had to be simultaneously vigilant and active on two fronts. On the one hand, I had to battle against the evil forces which were bent upon undoing all that had been achieved so far in the fields of culture, civilisation and genuine human growth in consciousness. On the other hand, I had to engage myself in creative endeavour of epoch proportions to usher in a happy, bright, peacefilled future for humanity at large.

I had nothing to do for my own sake. God provides food even to tiny creatures and insects. Everybody gets up hungry in the morning but seldom does any one sleep hungry at nightfall. From the very beginning, I had no passion, desire, lust and greed; and ego could not beguile me. Whatever I was doing was done for God's sake according to *Gurudev*'*s* direction. He had entrusted these two tasks of struggle against the forces of darkness and of Divine creation, both of which I was doing enthusiastically. There was never any room for procrastination or evasion in my nature. By the grace of God, it was my habit from the very beginning to do whatever had to be done with full attention and enthusiasm.

As regards the resources necessary for new creation, *Gurudev* had always indicated the formula of sowing and reaping. A small single grain of maize or bajra, when it develops into a plant, yields more than hundred such grains. Draupadi had torn a small portion of her *sārī* and had given it to a saint so that he could use it as *langotī* (a strip of cloth tucked round the waist) to cover his nudity. In course of time it magnified to such an extent that Shri Krishna had to rush with a huge bundle of *saris* to help her in the moment of

her dire need. *Gurudev* said, " Whatever you want to get, start sowing its seed." I strictly followed this *mantra* and the result was according to his assurance.

Along with his physical form a human being gets astral and causal bodies, intellect and aspirations (feelings) from God. Money which one gets is either self-earned or inherited. I had not earned but had inherited ample property from my ancestors. In pursuance of *Gurudev's* directions, I used all my money, resources, intellect and aspirations for God's work. I performed worship (*upāsanā*) in the night and used my time and labour throughout the day in the service of *Virāt Brahma.* This was my *sādhanā*.

Not only during waking hours, but even in my dreams my mind and intellect always remained engrossed in the pursuit of ways and means for promoting the welfare of mankind. My aspirations and feelings always remained absorbed in the *Virāt*. I loved noble ideals and not objects or persons. Aspirations for uplifting the down-trodden always surged in my heart.

I considered this *Virāt* to be my God. Arjun, Yashoda, Kaushalya, Kakbhusundi had a glimpse of this *Virāt* and they were all blessed.

I dedicated everything which I had to the *Virāt Brahma*, to humanity as a whole. There could be no better and fertile field to sow the seeds of goodness, nobility, service, selflessness etc. In course of time these yielded bumper crops and my godowns were all full with the rich harvest. Resources and resource persons were thus made amply available for the tasks which were entrusted to me.

From the point of view of physical build-up I was weak from my very birth but life force within has always been mighty. In young age I had taken only bread of barley and buttermilk without any vegetables, *ghī* or milk for twenty-four years. The body was, therefore, bound to be lean and thin but having resorted to the technique of sowing and reaping it is so strong even at the age of 78 that when a few days back a bull who had run amuck assaulted me, it was pushed with the help of my shoulders and thrown flat on the ground and it had to beat a hasty retreat.

It is no longer a secret that about a year back a hired killer, backed by promoters of immorality and extremist tendencies, repeatedly attempted to shoot me with a five-bore revolver but the bullets got stuck in the bullet holes and in an utter sense of panic and bewilderment the revolver fell down from his hands. He then started madly stabbing me. There was profuse

bleeding. None of the strokes, however, pierced deep into the body and miraculously got deflected sideways. The doctors stitched the wounds and in a few weeks the wounds healed and my body became normal as before.

This should be regarded as a miraculous event in as much as a loaded five-bore revolver in the hands of a hired professional killer refused to work. Twelve stabs of a dagger used for cutting animals ended up leaving behind only superficial wounds. The culprit later got wounded by his own bomb and landed in jail. The person on whose instigation he had committed this heinous assault has been awarded death sentence. Demoniac attack of evil forces thus failed to checkmate divine efforts. It was thus established that the 'saviour is greater than the killer'.

These days the technique of *sūkṣmīkaraṇa* – of transforming one into five, is in progress. This has resulted in further thinning of the body. Still, this body is in such a condition that it can remain alive as long as I wish to keep it, but I will not voluntarily do so because a stage comes when physical body becomes a hurdle and hindrance and ought to be shed, as far greater work can be accomplished through the astral body.

The life force in this body has worked ten times more than its normal capacity. Shankaracharya and Vivekananda lived only for about thirty-five years but accomplished what could not have been ordinarily accomplished in 350 years. In seventy-eight years I have done so much work in different fields that in the ordinary course of mere human effort it could not have been done in less than 750 years. The entire time was spent in preparing a foundation for new creative work.

Intelligence was sown in the field of God and it manifested in the form of extraordinary brilliance. Literature of superb quality written by me so far is equivalent to the weight of my body. Articles have been written and piled up to be published and used till the year 2000 A.D. None has so far been able to concretise the aim of synthesising spirituality with science, which is being done in Brahmavarchas Research Institute. In the near future the authenticity of spirituality will have to be tested on the touchstone of scientific approach.

There is much hue and cry about preparing and implementing five-year plans by different countries but the plan of spiritually transforming the whole of humanity and its implementation, which is being undertaken at Shantikunj, can be termed as amazing.

I have dedicated my feelings and aspirations for the uplift of the down-trodden. *Śiva* had done the same thing. He enjoyed the company of creatures of strange and freakish shapes and sizes. He even embraced snakes. I followed the same path. When the fellow who had assaulted me with a dagger was being chased by the people and the police, I called them back and allowed him to escape. There had been several such occasions in my life when the adversaries who had left no stones unturned to harm me were rewarded in return by a smile.

I have immensely loved people and in return have been loved by them hundred times more. They have followed my directions with devotion and total dedication in the face of great difficulties and have even gladly suffered material losses for the sake of *mission's* work. Just on hearing a word from me splendid buildings of *Gāyatrī Śaktipīṭhas* were erected costing crores of rupees. In addition, twelve thousand *Pragyā sansthāns* were also started. When I was assaulted many people rushed to Shantikunj to express their love and sympathy as if Shantikunj had been inundated by a sea of humanity. Each one of them expressed his keenness to take revenge but we coaxed and pacified them and diverted their minds to creative directions. This was nothing but an expression of love, affection and intense intimacy towards me by the people.

I address my wife as *Mātājī*. We have intimate and deep love for each other. She has lived with me like a shadow and has participated with me in all activities of the *mission*. It will be true to say that we have one life (*prāṇ*), although two bodies.

I have been loved even by animals and birds who have lived with me like friends and family members. This has been witnessed by people with great amazement. Creatures who ordinarily shun human beings did not hesitate to sit on my shoulders and sleep by my side in my bed. This is nothing but a reflection of their love and affection for me.

I needed money from time to time. Crores of rupees were spent in building Gayatri Tapobhumi, Shantikunj, Gayatri Nagar, Brahmavarchas Institute. Without deviating from the pledge of not begging anything from human beings, all the needs were fulfilled. The number of full-time workers is more than a thousand. Satisfactory arrangements for their maintenance according to the lifestyle of a true *brāhmaṇa* are being made. All expenses on account of press, publication, jeeps and other transport are being met without difficulty. All this is the harvest of the seeds sown in the field of

God in the form of each and every *paisa* which I possessed. I am proud of this harvest. Though, personally I am penniless, huge schemes are being materialised which it is impossible even for a multi-millionaire to do. All this could be possible only on account of the formula given by *Gurudev*, "Do not accumulate, scatter, sow and reap". Implementation of this formula of *Gurudev* is the background of this flourishing garden of righteousness which is visible in the form of *Gāyatrī parivār*.

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CHAPTER 9

MIND OF A BRĀHMANA – ACTIONS *OF A RIṢI*

As soon as attributes of a *brāhmaṇa* awaken in the inner-self of an individual, saintliness is effortlessly expressed in his actions. A *brāhmaṇa* means a person who possesses the moral strength to overcome allurements and greed. He resists temptations and is happily contented in leading the life of an average citizen. I received guidance from *Gurudev* in the early days of my life how to cultivate these attributes of a *brāhmaṇa*. Thus, I was truly reborn as a *brāhmaṇa*; my physical birth from *brāhmaṇa* parents was of no significance. I might have assumed and shed human bodies carrying an animal-like soul during many lives in the past. I have no recollection how many times during this immortal and eternal journey, I had led sinful, animal-like lives, heavy-laden with sin and consequent suffering. But I feel blessed and blissful with the achievements of this life, which can be truly called of a *brāhmaṇa*. It is in this very birth that I have had the rare opportunity and joy of transforming myself into a divinised man in an animal body. A *brāhmaṇa* has a huge fund of surplus energy at his disposal, as he spends only a small fraction of it to satisfy his personal and family needs. Elephants, camels, buffaloes, have big stomachs. One can understand why they spend so much time in filling up their stomachs. A man with two dexterous and skillful hands, a mind capable of finding out thousand ways and means to earn necessary resources and cooperation of family and friends, should be able to earn his livelihood easily. Man has a very small stomach. Even

peacocks, pigeons earn enough to meet their daily needs. There is thus no problem, as such, for man to earn his livelihood. It can be done within a few hours, leaving many spare hours for altruistic efforts. Persons in whom saintliness awakens think only as to how best and where to utilise their spare time, labour, resources and talents.

It does not need much time to find a reply to this question. The lives of illumined personalities provide us the demonstrations in this respect. One is free to accept any of these divinised personages as his role model. Only demons have unrestrained and insatiable cravings and desires. It is they who plan to amass unlimited wealth and resources and to enjoy them without restraint; but none, right from Hiranayaksha to Sikandar, was able to fulfil such a desire.

Divine man, *Dev-mānav*, emerges at the meeting point between the soul and God. He has several other names like a great man, a saint, a reformer, a martyr etc. In ancient days such persons were known as *Riṣis* whose needs were the minimum and who applied the savings of their resources, money etc. in tasks which were essential to fulfil the needs of the Time Spirit. They helped in enhancing righteous tendencies. They did not allow the evil designs of those who were bent upon causing destruction to succeed. *Riṣis* mobilised all their efforts directly or indirectly in this direction. They did immense work by moving ahead in positive pursuits step by step and by accumulating a reservoir of excellence, drop by drop.

I fail to appreciate that devotion (*bhaktī*) in which there is emotional effervescence, without any moral restraint. I found the *Riṣi* path of life worth emulation and tried to mobilise all my time and resources in the revival of these traditions. Those engaged in constant single-pointed effort are able to amass huge wealth through small earnings over a time. A bird collects straws one by one and prepares a beautiful nest. It was my good fortune that I got an opportunity to revive *Riṣi* traditions and it has shown good results.

Different *Riṣis* had undertaken different assignments in the ancient times and had accomplished them satisfactorily. They had sufficient leisure and opportunities to do so. But in these days of emergency several things are to be done simultaneously with great speed. If a house is on fire, the work of rescuing children and valuable goods has to be done at the same time. I am facing a similar situation and different tasks which different *Riṣis* had entrusted to me were to be accomplished simultaneously. I have received inspiration, guidance and help from my great *Gurudev* and I have done

whatever I was required to do with utmost willingness. The ancient story of Shri Krishna acting as charioteer and Arjun handling the Gandiva bow seems to have been repeated in my case.

A momentous task like transforming of an epoch is accomplished by the will, plan and power of God but the credit for it is given to liberated *Riṣi-kalpa* souls. This alone is the best reward for their *sādhanā*, their competence. I also got the opportunity of getting this credit and I feel blessed and fulfilled. As I am able to clearly foresee even at this moment the events that are to happen in the distant future, I have no hesitation in making this statement.

None of the ancient *Riṣis* have their physical bodies now although their individual consciousnesses still persist in appropriate planes of manifestation. I was introduced to all of them and was asked to follow in their foot-prints, establish an *Āśram* at Shantikunj, Haridwar as a symbol of *Devātmā Himālaya* and execute the programme of revival of *Riṣi* traditions in such a way that the transition to the new era may be as smooth as possible.

Riṣis, great men with awakened souls, who had once lived physically in the *Himālayas* and about whom *Gurudev* had referred in my third pilgrimage to the *Himālayas*, were Bhagirath (Gangotri); Parashuram (Yamunotri); Charak (Kedarnath); Vyas (Badrinath); Yagyavalkya (Triyugi-Narayan); Narad (Gupta Kashi); Adya Shankracharya (Jyotirmath); Jamdagni (Uttrakashi); Vashistha (Dev Prayag); Pippalada, Soot-Shounik, Lakshman, Bharat and Shastrughna (Rishikesh); and Daksha Prajapati, Kanada, *Sapt-Riṣis* including Vishvamitra (Haridwar). I was given glimpses of the lives and works of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sant Gyaneshwar and Tulsidas and was directed to spread the *parivrājak dharmacakra* (reawakening movement) of *Bhagvān* Buddha throughout the world in the light of present circumstances through the medium of music, *sankīrtan* and discourses of *Pragyā Puraṇa* and thus enable *Pragyāvatār* to fulfil the latter half of the mission of *Buddhāvatār*. *Gurudev* had already given a hint during my pilgrimage to the *Himālayas* that just as gymnasiums, Mahaveer temples were got established by me, in one of my earlier births as Samartha Ramdas, I have to give them new forms as *Pragyā sansthāns*, *Pragyāpīṭhas*, *Caraṇapīṭhas*, *Gyān-mandirs*, *Svādhyāya maṇḍals* etc.

The direction of transforming Shantikunj as a symbolic representative of *Devātmā Himālaya* was not an easy task. It needed labour, money and cooperation of the colleagues. The souls of *Riṣis* residing in the *Himālaya* in astral bodies had to be summoned, invoked and installed here. Temples

of various gods have been built at various places but living installation of the souls of all the *Riṣis* at one place cannot be found elsewhere. It is still more important to know that not only mere idols of *Riṣis* have been installed here for symbolic worship but anyone sufficiently purified and fine-tuned can feel the strong vibrations of their particular energies. Thus, Shantikunj and Brahmavarchas represent the energies of all the *Riṣis*.

To commemorate His victory over Lanka and establish *Rām-rājya*, *Bhagvān* Ram had built the temple of Rameshwaram and installed the idol of Shiva. It is my good fortune that I had got an opportunity to build a temple and install the living soul of *Devātmā Himālaya* in Shantikunj as a living symbol of my single-pointed pursuit (*param puruṣārtha*) towards the ushering in of the new era. The grand temple of *Devātmā Himālaya* can be seen here along with five *Prayags*, five *Kashis*, five sacred rivers, five sacred lakes as well as the respective places of *tapasyā* of the *Riṣis*. This is thus a unique temple. Those who have not visited the difficult regions of the higher *Himālayas* can have the satisfaction of having a view of *Devātmā Himālaya* in miniature at Shantikunj.

Jamdagni's son, Parashuram, had beheaded several tyrants by his battle axe. This can be taken as a symbolic description also. He had performed *tapaścaryā* in Yamnotri and had started a campaign for creative transformation. He destroyed evil tendencies of persons who were engrossed in immorality and were acting as impediments in the transformation of the society. He was engaged in the heroic task of rooting out viciousness and corruption prevalent in the minds of the people of his time. For this *Bhagvān* Shiva gifted him a *Paraṣu* (battle axe). In his latter half of life he had discarded the axe and had taken a spade in his hands which outwardly was symbolic of tree plantation but actually meant sowing the seeds of righteousness and creativity. The written and spoken words emanating from Shantikunj have played the role of *Paraṣu* in radically transforming the beliefs, feelings, thoughts and activities of innumerable persons.

Bhagirath had performed rigorous *tapaścaryā* to bring the Ganga from heavens to earth for removing water scarcity. Bhagirath Shila is situated near Gangotri. Ganga descended as a result of his *tapaścaryā* and heroic industriousness and was, therefore, named as Bhagirathi. Bhagirath was put through a tough test; he successfully passed the test and earned the grace of *Bhagvān* Shiva. Today, there is an all-pervading famine of faith which can only be removed by *Gyān Gangā*, the divine flow of knowledge. The present famine in the realms of feelings and thoughts can be removed

by the cleansing stream of knowledge which is flowing constantly from Shantikunj and it is hoped that goodwill and righteousness will soon be established throughout the world.

Charak *Riṣi* had undertaken thorough research of the inaccessible region of Kedarnath in the *Himālayas* to find out rare medicinal herbs which helped in healing. It is described in the scripture that Charak *Riṣi* used to have conversations with such herbs and enquired from them about their healing characteristics and qualities. He used to collect them at the appropriate time and conducted research on them. Several medicines which help in the growth of the life-forces, in pacifying emotions and mental derangements and which possess the qualities of bringing about positive changes in attitudes, actions and nature of man are contributions of his research. Ancient *Ayurveda* has been revived here and research on finding out rare medicines and testing their ingredients, qualities with the help of modern scientific equipments, is being done at Shantikunj. How the use of only one appropriate medicine at a time can promote longevity is one of the researches which are being conducted here in accordance with *Riṣi* traditions of Charak.

Maharṣi Vyas had written *Purāṇas* with the help of Ganesh in Vyas Cave near Vasodhara water-fall between the mountain ranges known as Nar and Narayan in Badrinath. Seclusion and peaceful and faithfilled environment is needed for doing any important work. In the present circumstances, when there is great dearth of good and inspiring literature, the founder of Shantikunj had, about twenty-five years back, written commentaries on four *Vedas*, eighteen *Purāṇas*, 108 *Upniṣads*, six *Darśans*, twenty-four *Gītās*, *Āraṇyaks*, *Brāhmaṇas* etc. and had made them easily available to all at modest prices. Appropriate literature, with a view to providing practical solutions to the forbidding problems of the present day life, is also being continuously written and it has influenced the hearts and minds of millions of people. The series of *Pragyā Purāṇas* are a novel creation in which the philosophy of *Upniṣads* has been explained in simple, easily understandable style through the medium of tales and stories.

Patanjali had conducted several researches and experiments on the science of *yoga* at Rudra Prayag on the confluence of Alaknanda and Mandakini. He proved that human body was a storehouse of energy. If the centres of energy within the body could be awakened a man can be transformed into a divinised person and he can acquire immense spiritual

powers (*riddhis* and *siddhis*). In Shantikunj the *sādhaks* are imparted training in *haṭhayoga*, *kāyākalpa*, *āsans* and *prāṇāyām*. They are examined mentally and physically by a team of qualified doctors and experts with the help of sophisticated scientific instruments and are advised and guided about the *sādhanā* which they have to perform.

Yagyavalkya had undertaken research on *yagya* at Triyugi Narayan, had verified its efficacy in promoting the health of living beings and vegetation, in purification of the environment, inducing rainfall etc. There is a *yagya-kunḍ* (hearth) in an inaccessible place in the *Himālayas* in which fire has been burning uninterruptedly since times immemorial. It is said that it is aglow since the marriage of Shiv-Parvati and is a symbol of the ancient tradition of fire. The Brahmavarchas Research Institute has undertaken the responsibility of conducting research on the ancient science of *yagya* which has become almost extinct these days. A full-fledged laboratory, duly equipped with modern scientific equipments, is functioning in the campus of this Institute for conducting researches on *yagyopathy* and people are wonder-struck to see its amazing positive impact on environment, pollution and treatment of physical and mental ailments, growth of vitality, rainfall of vital *parjanya* etc.

Vishvamitra is regarded as the Seer of *Gāyatrī mantra*, a creator of a new world. *Sapta-Riṣis* including Vishvamitra had in the ancient times performed *tapaścaryā* on the sanctified land on which at present Shantikunj campus stands and had attained the grace of *Ādya-śakti Gāyatrī*. I was inspired by *Gurudev* to build an ashram at this very land. The subtle vibrations of creative *sādhanā* of Vishvamitra are still intensely active here. *Mahāpragyā* has been given the status of *Yug-Śakti* here and by installing idols of its 24 primary emanations, the message of *Ādya-śakti* (Primordial Creative Power) of *vasudhaiva kuṭuṁbakaṁ* and of steadfast and pure wisdom and righteousness was proclaimed from here. Several *sādhaks* have performed *Gāyatrī anuṣṭhāns* and have grown spiritually. The Vishvamitra tradition is being revived here by conducting research about the power of sound and the technique of *Sāvitrī*.

All-round training to *vānprasthīs* was given in the ancient times in *Gurukul Āraṇyak* of Jamdagni which was located at Uttarkashi. Facilities were provided for training of wise, mature and aspiring persons in the performance of *sādhanā* and penance. In Shantikunj arrangements have been made to impart training to *parivrājak vānprasthīs* and public service workers. Children are imparted training in moral education in this *Āśram*'*s Gurukul*

vidyālaya and all-round training is being given to *sādhaks* in *Yug-shilpī vidyālaya*.

Devarṣi Narada had performed *tapaścaryā* in Guptkashi. He used to play Veena and was constantly engaged in the work of public awakening. He used to give righteous guidance to the people by arousing their positive emotions and tendencies. *Yug-Nirmāṇ* music training school of Shantikunj has trained thousands of *parivrājaks*, who undertake tours in their regions and move in a group in jeeps in furtherance of Narad tradition.

Vashishtha had preached *Yog-Vaśiṣṭha* to Ram at Devprayag. He integrated religion with statecraft. The founder of Shantikunj had participated in the Independence Movement from 1930 to 1947 and had undergone torture in jails. Later, the society was guided by him through the medium of books, literature; and everything which could be possible was done for the integration of spirituality and polity.

Adya Shankaracharya had performed *tapaścaryā* at Jyotirmath and had established four *dhāms* (spiritual centres) in four corners of the country. His object was to integrate different cultures and to awaken people through religious institutions. This work of spreading *Yug-cetnā* is now being conducted by Shantikunj through the network of *Gāyatrī Śaktipīṭhas*, *Pragyā sansthāns*, *Svādhyāya maṇḍals* etc. which have been established throughout the country in the tradition of Adya Shakaracharya.

Riṣi Pipplada had conducted research near Rishikesh on the effect of food on mind. He maintained himself on the fruits of pipal tree and attained self-realisation by exercising restraint and self-control. I strictly restricted myself to a diet of barley bread and butter-milk for twenty-four years, while performing *Gāyatrī anuṣṭhāns*. Even thereafter, I have been living on boiled foodgrains and vegetables. *Amritāśan* experiments are being conducted in Shantikunj in this respect. Soot-Shounik *Riṣis* used to hold sessions of discourses at Rishikesh by narrating ancient tales relating to the scriptures. The discourses of *Pragyā Purāṇa* in the present times have become so popular that people call it *Yug-Purāṇa*. Four volumes of *Pragyā Purāṇa* have already been published and subsequent volumes are planned to be published in due course.

Harshvardhan had donated all his wealth at the time of *Sarva-medh yagya* which was performed at Har-Ki-Pouri, Haridwar. The founder of Shantikunj, too, had donated all his property for the construction of Gayatri Tapobhumi at Mathura and a high school in the village of his birth-place and kept

nothing for himself or his family members. This tradition is now being followed by other workers who are permanently linked with Shantikunj.

Kanada *Riṣi* had conducted research about nuclear science and scientific aspect of spirituality according to the research traditions of *Atharva Veda*. The intelligentsia today can be convinced not by words but by logic, facts, figures and evidence. In Brahmavarchas Research Institute, research is being conducted for integration of science and spirituality and the world is eagerly awaiting its results.

The *parivrājaks* of Buddha had undertaken extensive tours to spread the message of *dharma* (religion) throughout the world. In Shantikunj, *parivrājaks* are being trained for spreading the message of divine culture throughout the world. In India itself about a lakh *Pragyā-putras* are engaged in this work of spreading *Yug-cetnā* from house to house.

Aryabhatta was a great scientist who conducted astronomical researches to examine the influence of other planets of the solar system on the earth, its atmosphere and living beings. An observatory has been set up in Gayatri Nagar, astronomical researches are being conducted and an almanac based on *driṣya* Arithmetic is being published from here. The spiritual teachings of the saints of the middle ages, viz. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sant Gyaneshwar, Samarth Guru Ramdas, Prannath Mahaprabhu, Ramkrishna Paramhansa in regard to the spread of righteousness are being followed in Shantikunj.

It is most important to stress that the atmosphere of this *Āśram* is so surcharged with piety and righteousness that it automatically attracts people towards spirituality. This is due to the presence here of *Riṣis* in their astral forms. They must definitely be quite happy to see revival of their ancient traditions here. This earth has been blessed by the *tapaścaryā* performed here by the *Riṣis*. Lav-Kush were brought up and trained in Valmiki Ashram, Bharat in Kandva *Āśram*, Rukmini performed *tapaścaryā* in Badrinarayan and gave birth to Pradyumna who, in valour and wisdom, was equal to his father, Shri Krishna. Pavan and Anjani gave birth to Bajarangabali in the *Āśram* of Poosha. These are miraculous boons of *tapaścaryā, sādhanā* performed in this holy region of the *Himālayas*.

There are several instances of advantages accruing to faithfilled persons from contacts with saints and by visiting holy places. A drop of water of *svāti nakṣattra* falling in an oyster-shell becomes a pearl. It becomes *vanśalocan* when it falls on a bamboo tree and camphor when it meets a

plantain tree. A piece of iron when it touches *pāras* becomes gold. My guide, *Gurudev,* has been living since several centuries in his astral body at Nandanvan in the *Himālayas*, which is known as heaven of the earth, the gateway of which is Haridwar, wherein Shantikunj is situated. He summoned me to the *Himālayas* from time to time to recharge my spiritual battery, whenever I was to be entrusted with new responsibility. I always experienced having returned from the *Himālayas* with an immensely augmented store of energy.

I often invite awakened souls, *Pragyā-putras*, to Shantikunj to undergo training or perform *sādhanā* to acquire competence to play the role akin to the bears and monkeys of *Tretā Yug*, of *gvāl-bāls* of *Dvāpar Yug* in the tasks of ushering in the new golden era. This place has its own significance on account of divine patronage. Persons residing here even for a short time feel that they are being rejuvenated. In fact it is a spiritual sanatorium.

The *ghrit* lamp which has been alight for the last sixty years, performance of *yagya* for two hours daily in the morning and *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* in both the *navrātrīs*, daily *jap* by *sādhaks* in this *sādhanā Āraṇyak*, all combine to create a sanctified divine environment here, as one finds in Malayagiri by the sweet smell of sandal wood. Even without doing *sādhanā* a person feels unalloyed joy as if his entire time here has been spent in *tapaścaryā* and *sādhanā*. Shantikunj *Gāyatrī Tīrtha* is a sacred *Siddhapīṭha* because the *Riṣis* in their astral bodies are present here, overseeing the various kinds of activities being carried on here pertaining to their particular traditions.

The most important work of my life has been to make direct and indirect, visible and invisible efforts to change the present milieu. These days there is intense crisis of faith. People are bent upon breaking all principles of propriety, morality and conduct. This has resulted in the growth of evil conduct and licentiousness. Today, neither an individual is happy nor is there any stability in the society. Problems, calamities, horrors are increasing day by day. The efforts to stem this overwhelming tide of unrightousness are not succeeding anywhere. The remedy lies only in the refinement of the minds and emotions of the masses and inspiring growth of righteous tendencies. This has to be done directly by constructive, reformative work and indirectly by invisible spiritual influence. This is being done and the entire energy is being mobilised to attain this objective. The results attained so far are encouraging and the results visualised in future will be unprecedented.

In short, *Riṣi* traditions have been adopted and revived by a *brāhmaṇa* mind in all earnestness. Persons who are engaged in such a work not only do good to themselves but also promote the welfare of others.

CHAPTER 10

VISIBLE ATTAINMENTS OF *SĀDHANĀ* (*SIDDHI*)

Accumulation of worldly possessions and riches is automatically reflected in a person's nature attitude and conduct. A healthy person looks strong and beautiful. Affluent persons are full of pomp and show. Intelligence of a man is reflected in his speech, conduct and behaviour. In the same way, when spiritual treasure is amassed, its impact becomes apparent. *Sādhanā* is bound to result in *siddhi* which means extraordinary achievements. Even ordinary persons attain success by dint of their industriousness and resources but the success attained in the spiritual field is exemplary and unique and it cannot be attained by solitary efforts of an ego-centred person.

It is a matter of deep lament that spirituality has been degenerated to the level of jugglery by quacks and people mistake mere conjurer's tricks as proofs of spiritual attainments. An acrobat displays his acrobatic feats so that people may be dazzled, amazed and surprised. He thus gets tumultuous applause and earns money. But none of these feats fulfil the purpose of doing any public good. It is simply a means to earn a livelihood. There are several persons amongst the so-called saints who by showing such magical stunts, strut about as persons of great spiritual attainment. Simple people are often heard having been cheated by some persons by raising a hand in the air and producing cardamom, sweetmeats etc., or professing to possess the power of doubling the currency notes. It is foolish on the part of the common people that they are unable to distinguish *siddhis* of the spiritual plane from mere jugglery and miraculous stunts. It is essential to understand the fundamental difference between the life style, morality and daily routine of a *siddha puruṣa* (saint) and those who are mere jugglers or acrobats.

Sādhanā which leads to *siddhi*, means undertaking specific tasks which are related to the overall welfare of mankind and which are so great and extensive that a person cannot accomplish them single-handed through his own strength and efforts. Still, there are people who have enough courage, who go ahead and ultimately accomplish aims which initially appeared to be unattainable. In due course they get people's participation also. Spiritually awakened souls move ahead even in the absence of resources and cooperation and

believe in rowing alone their boat across the river with the help of self-confidence and faith in God. Ordinary people have a different mentality. They undertake a work only after they are convinced of getting resources and others' cooperation.

Siddha (spiritually evolved) persons engaged in *sādhanā* have been accomplishing great tasks. This is the miracle of their *siddhi*. To initiate the movement for Independence, Samarth Guru Ramdas inspired a Maratha boy and placed him at the forefront. Buddha launched a worldwide ethical awakening movement to eradicate corruption and spread it throughout Asia. *Satyāgraha* movement started by Gandhi with the help of a handful of persons, by preparing salt at Dhurasana, spread throughout the country. Everybody knows how extensive and successful was the *Bhūdān* movement which was started all alone by Vinoba. Scouting, Red Cross and similar other movements were initially started on small scales and steadily spread worldwide. Vanasthali Balika Vidyapeeth of Rajasthan, Baba Amte's Seva Sadan for persons suffering from leprosy are shining examples of such works. There have been several instances where availability of expertise, resources and cooperation were almost negligible in the beginning but, by the sheer strength of will of the pioneer, the momentum of the movement was kept up and the work continued moving forward with whatever resources and cooperation were available. Thus, behind the fulfilment of righteous purposes one can have a glimpse of the process of attainment of *siddhi* by *sādhanā*.

One will not be disappointed if he wants to find out *siddhis* attained by me as a result of *sādhanā*. In the beginning people termed it as foolhardiness and warned me that I would be laughed at and ridiculed but I had unflinching faith in God who had inspired me to take up that work in hand. Determination to do work for public good and firm faith that it would be backed by divine help will provide strength of perseverance to a person who is free from greed and allurements.

When the energy of *sādhanā* matured in the form of *siddhi* it was decided to channelize it in fulfilling timely needs. The work was started. It appeared as if everything was pre-planned. Several persons in the beginning termed it as sheer madness and misadventure but when all these efforts started bearing fruit they conceded that it was the *siddhi* of *sādhanā*. All these acts of madness are summed up below:

1. Taking a pledge at the age of 15 to perform twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* along with several self-imposed restraints for twenty-

four years and fulfilling it without faltering.

2. By way of *pūrṇāhuti*, a *Sahastra-kunḍī yagya* was performed at Mathura in 1958 in which four lakh *Gāyatrī sādhaks* were invited and all of them attended. Arrangements were made for their stay, food etc. for five days free of charge. A huge *yagyaśālā* stage and pandal were erected and seven temporary townships, within a radius of seven miles, were set up. Lakhs of rupees were spent without begging a single paisa and the whole function was celebrated smoothly without any interruption or disorder.

3. Ancestral property was sold and a grand building of Gayatri Tapobhumi was built at Mathura. Later, it developed into a huge centre of ethical, moral and spiritual education of the masses through the help voluntarily given by the people, for which no appeal was made.

4. *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* magazine is being published regularly since 1937 without accepting any advertisements. The weekly *Harijan* published by Gandhiji had to be discontinued when it became nonviable. At present one and half lakh copies of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* are being published and each issue is being read by several persons. Its readers are not less than a million.

5. Ancient spiritual and religious literature has been translated into Hindi and absolutely low-priced books incorporating spiritual principles applicable in practical life have been published in large numbers. Some of them have also been translated into other Indian languages. These books have enlightened millions of people who have read them.

6. *Gāyatrī parivār* has been established which is spearheading (a) *Pragyā abhiyān* (movement for refining public mind and) (b) *Yug Nirmāṇ Yojnā* for the growth of righteous tendencies and attitudes in the society.

7. Regular training is being imparted according to prescribed curriculum to *Yug-śilpī pragyā-putras* in regular camps in self-development and development of the society. *Sādhanā* camps of ten days each are being held for *Gāyatrī sādhaks*, free of cost.

8. Brahmavarchas Research Institute has been established to conduct research for integration of science and spirituality. High level research on *Yagyopathy* and the great power of *Gāyatrī mantra* are being conducted here. The work of conducting new research on the ancient science of medicinal herbs initiated by Charak *Riṣi* has also been taken up. The broken links of the ancient astronomical science are also being discovered anew.

9. 2,400 *Pragyāpīṭhas* and 12000 *Pragyā sansthāns* have been established for moral, intellectual and social rejuvenation and revitalisation. Efforts are being made to spread *yugāntarīya cetnā* amongst migrants of Indian origin in seventy-five foreign countries.

10. A new centre has been established for the in-depth study of various languages and cultures of the world so that the message of the advent of the New Golden Era could be brought home to the people of the world at large. For the present, publicity squads are being deputed in jeeps to Hindi, Gujarati, Oriya, and Marathi speaking regions, but they will soon be sent to all parts of the country to strengthen the roots of righteousness, enlightenment and unity.

11. Publicity is being done through the medium of tape recorders and slide projectors. It will now be done by video films also.

12. The message of *Pragyā abhiyān* is being spread through folders in many languages for creating an awareness of the emerging new higher consciousness in humanity.

13. Four volumes of *Pragyā Purāṇa* have been published. Efforts are afoot to publish them in other languages; and its tapes are also being prepared. Through the medium of stories and tales in *Pragyā Purāṇa* an effort has been made to provide guidance to the common masses for meeting the day-to-day challenges and problems of present day life righteously, boldly and wisely.

14. Not less than 1000 guests, pilgrims and trainees are in residence at Shantikunj at one time. They are provided free board and lodging. They return after taking *prasād* with a deepened faith in and respect for the *mission's* activities.

15. Many persons come to *Gāyatrī Tīrtha*, Shantikunj and perform *anuṣṭhān sādhanā*. This has helped them in their inner self-growth, in getting rid of evil tendencies and moulding their lives in accordance with perennial principles of truth. These positive orientations in their personalities have been scientifically verified at the Brahmavarchas Research Institute.

It can be well imagined how much labour, concentration, manpower and resources must have been needed to accomplish so huge a task. The fact is that the invisible power of only one individual has been in operation for accomplishment of all these stupendous tasks. The method of begging money or raising funds through contributions was never adopted. Everybody knows

what pressures and persuasions are required to be used in collecting money these days. But here, everything has been done voluntarily on the basis of cooperation. This is the only *mission* which functions on the basis of individual contribution of ten paisa in *gyān-ghat* and a handful of foodgrains in *dharma-ghat* per day by the devotees. Everybody who contributes this insignificant amount feels a sense of belonging to the institution, which is functioning by his help and cooperation. The organisers are also ever cautious to spend every paisa after careful consideration. Thus, an intimate relationship of cordiality and of close affinity is established between the members and the organisation. This is the secret behind the success of this *mission*.

No other organisation has as many selfless, trusted and contented workers of great calibre as are found here. Everyone associated with this organisation has tested it and firmly believes that the soul of a *brāhmaṇa* is luminously at work here. Millions of people had abandoned their homes and had become the disciples, *parivrājaks* of Buddha. Those who participated in Gandhi's *satyāgrah* did not ask for any remuneration. Similarly *Pragyā abhiyān* is the rare example of an organisation in which thousands of highly qualified full-time workers are working for the *mission* merely on food and clothes.

It is indeed a unique miracle wrought by the divine energy of *siddhi*, through which so much money, manpower, resources and spontaneous cooperation of people at large are flowing to the *mission*.

I had to go to the *Himalayās* a number of times in the past on the direction of my *Gurudev* for performing *sādhanā* in solitude. People link these journeys with something miraculous. They believe that the *Himalayās* are the abode of miracle-performing beings and realised souls. In fact, I had to go to the *Himalayās* to become more introvert. The exterior life of a person is dominated by outer events but his inner life is influenced by feelings and sentiments. An illumined mind and a loving heart constitute spirituality. The rat-race for gratification of desires and amassing of material objects is materialism. Since I have dedicated my whole life to demonstrate life-affirming spirituality, while outwardly leading a normal worldly life, it became essential for me to occasionally retire into solitude with a view to nullify any influence of materialism on the exterior life. An effort was made during my *agyātvās* (living in solitude in an unknown place) in the *Himalayās* to bring the soul as close to God as possible. The most important aim was the cultivation of elevated, sublime feelings and sentiments which do not need the support of persons, resources and favourable circumstances.

In whatever circumstances one may be placed, the mental make-up has to be so moulded that it may be possible to visualise the deeper reality beneath the facade of superficial phenomenon. It is then that one feels immense joy and bliss and is able to see and visualise the presence of God everywhere.

Those who have an occasion to read my book 'Colleagues in Solitude' (*Sunsān-ke-Sahacar*) must have understood how one can have the experience of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda* by living a divinely inspired life. This is also a *siddhi*. I always remain deeply absorbed in happiness and bliss like God living in Heaven, although apparently I am leading an ordinary life of the world.

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CHAPTER 11

FOURTH AND FINAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE *HIMĀLAYAS*

Message was received, as in the past, and I was summoned to the *Himālayas* for the fifth time for a week in June 1984. There was no question of any delay in compliance with the instructions. Although, physically I have been engaged in doing the work entrusted to me, my soul has always remained in the inaccessible *Himālayas* with *Gurudev*, who lives in the *Himālayas* but whose soul always hovers around me. His voice always echoes in my inner-self in the form of inspiration. My heart, mind and soul dance to his tunes.

The journey was difficult, as before. This time, on account of my spiritual maturity, I was summoned in my astral body which had to appear again in three tests simultaneously. As before, I reached Gomukh and from there I was escorted to Tapovan. I never asked where *Gurudev's* astral body lives and what it does. I am only familiar with our meeting place, the velvety carpet. I picked up the flower known as *Brahma-kamal* and placed it at the holy feet of *Gurudev*. This time also, after exchange of usual salutations and blessings, conversation started. Throughout the journey, I was thinking that whenever I was called earlier, I was asked to leave the old place. Probably this may happen this time, too. I may be asked to leave Shantikunj and live in this *Riṣi Āśram* and may be entrusted with some important work here.

Gurudev expressed satisfaction with the work done thus far. I humbly told him that although everything was being accomplished by him, its credit was being given to me. Having fully surrendered myself to him, it was for him to take from me whatever work he wished.

Gurudev said, "Whatever you were asked to do till now was local and ordinary which can be done by any sufficiently evolved and elevated soul, as was done in the past. All these works will now be carried on by your followers and you will have to take up more important responsibilities. These days the physical and subtle environment has become so much poisonous and polluted that not only human dignity but the very existence of human species has been endangered. The future seems to be grim, dark and dreadful. To flush this poison out of the collective physical and subtle spheres, we will have to do indirectly all that which may be called unique and supernatural. The air surrounding the earth, its waters and land have all become poisonous. Scientific advancement has made an unholy alliance with diabolic greed and self-indulgence and the poison has been spread everywhere by mechanization on account of which the risks of infirmity, disease and ultimate extinction seem imminent. The danger of irresponsible,

reckless or inadvertent use of nuclear weapons by immature and unrefined persons in authority, causing mass scale annihilation, is also there. Children are being born like mushrooms. What will they eat? Where will they live? All these horrifying forebodings and possibilities coupled with the poisonous atmosphere would turn this earth into a veritable hell.

"Whosoever lives in this environment perforce indulges in evil thoughts and deeds, resulting in immediate miseries. Holocaust appears to be imminent. This is the result of invisible pollution in the atmosphere. Persons living in such conditions will behave like beasts and devils. It pains me to see humanity and the earth, which are the highest creations of God, turning into hell. Humanity is heading towards a great devastation. A huge mountain will have to be uplifted, as did Shri Krishna to save His people from the wrath of Indra, the Rain God; a vast sea will have to be bridged and crossed to solve these problems and for this you will have to take great strides like Vaman.

"For this you will have to become fivefold and take up strategic positions. Like Kunti, you will have to create five *Dev-putras*, deploy them on specific fronts and assign them different tasks."

Interjecting in the middle of the talk, I said it was for illumined souls like him to think about and find out solutions for these momentous problems. So far as I was concerned I was his child, a puppet in his hands and was prepared to dance to his tune. I asked *Gurudev* to kindly direct me what I had to do. Right from the performance of twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇa* of *Gāyatrī* to participation in the movement for Independence, from lifting the pen and start writing, to the performance of huge *yagyas* and raising up a huge organisation I had simply played the role of his instrument. I told him that I knew it very well whose power was working behind all these accomplishments. How could I, therefore, suggest or give advice? I told him, I will do whatever I was asked to do. Every drop of blood and every cell of my body and my inner consciousness, I said, were surrendered to him, for the service of humanity.

I was given necessary instructions and indications and was told, "You have to transform yourself from one to five. You have to do five types of austerities in five different manners, as was done by messenger of Ram or by five pandavas. Five birds can live on a tree. You have to transform into five. This is known as *sūkṣmīkaraṇa*. These five emanations will discharge these

colossal tasks. You have to nourish and strengthen these five astral bodies so long as they do not get matured and are able to function independently. This may take one year or more. When they become powerful enough, leave them to do their own work independently. When the time is ripe you will shed your visible physical form."

This was the guideline given by *Gurudev*. It was explained in detail what was to be done, how it was to be done. I am not permitted to disclose all these details. I am doing what I have been asked to do. It could be summed up as follows :

(1) purification of atmosphere; (2) refinement of the environment; (3) ushering in of a new era; (4) neutralisation of the danger of mass destruction; (5) creation and development of divinised humanity (*Dev- mānav*)

Gurudev told me how these five types of austerities had to be done, how my single entity was to be transformed into five entities, how the dual roles of Dadhichi and Bhagirath were to be played. He said, "For this you will have to retire from worldly activities and focus all your scattered energies. This is *sūkṣmīkaraṇa*."

Gurudev continued, "You will be indicated from time to time what has to be done. You will be protected from demoniac assaults which will be mounted to terminate your life with a view to abort the plan. There may be repetition of the earlier attack at any time in the form of assault on righteous *parijans*, but I will provide protection in all such eventualities. Now start entrusting your outer work to competent efficient *parijans* so that you may be free from all the responsibilities and worries of the work of this *mission*. The great change which is in my mind will be disclosed to you at the proper time. Premature disclosure of the strategy in such a critical time is bound to do harm."

This time I was not detained for a long time and there was no talk about recharging my battery. *Gurudev* said, "My energy will always be with you in invisible form. Myself and the *Riṣis* will always remain and work with you. You will never feel any dearth or lack of spiritual power. In fact, it will increase five times."

I was given farewell. I returned to Shantikunj. My *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā* started on *Rāmnavamī* in 1984.

Tapaścaryā essential for the growth of spiritual power

After returning from England, Aurobindo took all the measures to force the Britishers to leave India. Indian princes were organised, students were mobilised, a new party was formed but he soon realised that these stray efforts would be of no avail to confront the might of the powerful British empire. It was not possible in those days to do something like Gandhiji's *satyāgrah*. He, therefore, took up the work of generating spiritual power to warm up the atmosphere. He went out of the reach of the Britishers, lived in seclusion in Pondicherry and started doing special *tapaścaryā sādhanā*.

People may regard it as an act of escapism but it was not so. Those having keen observation knew it very well that Aurobindo generated powerful invisible energy by his *tapaścaryā*. The subtle atmosphere was warmed up, giving birth to a number of great personages at a time which was unprecedented in the history of the country. Anybody can be a political leader, but he is not necessarily a great man. Great persons are great from every point of view and they possess the capacity to visibly and invisibly move and influence the public mind. Having lost everything on account of slavery over a period of two thousand years, the country needed such helmsmen who could lead the nation out of difficulties. They were all born at one time in large numbers like whirlwinds in hot summer. Thus, in due course, Aurobindo's dream was fulfilled.

In the history of spiritual sciences, *tapaścaryā* and *sādhanā* have been regarded as the only means for higher attainments. This cannot be done by clinging to a luxurious, comfortable life style. It needs single-pointed concentration towards the achievement of the noble aim. At the time of writing eighteen *Purāṇas*, Vyas retired to a cave near Vasodhara in Uttarakhand. Ganesh undertook to help him as his scribe on the condition that he will not interrupt and will keep totally silent. Such an important work could not have been accomplished without this uninterrupted concentration.

Maharshi Raman remained engaged in *tapaścaryā* and observed silence during the period of struggle for Independence. Besides, several other elevated saints in the *Himālayas* performed specific *tapaścaryā* for this purpose. This invisible spiritual contribution cannot be seen and appreciated with material senses. Persons having spiritual insight alone know its truth.

Keeping in view the principle that means have to be in accord with the importance of a particular end, specific *tapaścaryā* is being performed these days to change for the better the quality of present atmosphere. Its nature

and standards are, therefore, difficult. In the beginning, I was entrusted with the task of refining public attitudes, and stimulating enthusiasm in the masses for constructive activities. This could not have been done merely by setting up an organisation and preparing speakers, musicians, resources of publicity etc. *Gurudev*, who understood the reality very well, had, therefore, entrusted only one task in the beginning, that of performing twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuraścaraṇas* for twenty-four years. The credit for all the accomplishments during the last thirty years goes to this initial *tapaścaryā* which served as a fixed deposit capital. At that time also it was not restricted merely to performing a fixed number of *jap*. Several restrictions, disciplines and pledges were also attached to it.

Jap of a fixed number of *mantras* can be performed by anybody who is sitting idle but accomplishment of any great task cannot be achieved merely by such symbolic worship. It has to be linked up with the strict *tapaścaryā* which energises and rejuvenates physical, astral and causal bodies and makes them strong in all respects. Accumulated sins and impurities act as great impediments in the path of spiritual progress. They can be burnt out by putting them in the furnace of *tapaścaryā*. When iron-ore is taken out from the earth it is raw and crude. Similar is the case with other metals. They have to be put in a burning furnace to purify them and make them fit for use. Valuable medicines, *bhasma* etc. are prepared by *Ayurvedic* physicians by purifying raw materials with fire. The potter has to put his raw pots in a kiln and apply requisite heat. The same rule applies to human beings. Service, *sādhanā*, religious pursuits of the *Riṣis* are all apparent deeds; but for acquiring power to achieve some specific goal, they have to undergo great intensive *tapaścaryā* from time to time. Every great person has to undergo this austerity in his own way because, without it, divine powers cannot be invoked, received, augmented and retained. So long as there is no piety, brilliance and maturity in the personality of a man, he cannot achieve remarkable, significant and praise-worthy success. How long can a tree which has no deep roots stand against the vagaries of nature and flourish?

The fundamental principles of *tapaścaryā* are self-restraint (*sanyam*) and proper utilisation of resources. By observing restraint of sense organs (*indriya-sanyam*), a man remains healthy and the store of his willpower never gets exhausted. By observing restriction in respect of spending money (*artha-sanyam*), a man has to lead a simple life of an average citizen and maintain himself on his self-earned, honest earnings. Best utilisation of one's own time is known as *samaya-sanyam*, in which a set work-routine

has to be followed and body and mind are applied to specific useful pursuits. This leaves no time for indulging in evil deeds. By exercising restraint in respect of thoughts (*vicār-sanyam*) the outlook of a person becomes devout, spiritual and religious and it becomes easy for him to perform *sādhanā* of *Bhakti-yog, Gyān-yog* and *Karm-yog*. Self-restraint (*sanyam*) means saving. By exercising *sanyam* of these four kinds, much energy is saved, after meeting worldly needs, which can be utilised in serving noble purposes. Such a person leads a relaxed happy jovial life and accomplishes his personal as well as universal good. *Gurudev* had taught me sixty years back to follow this path which I have been following strictly ever since. The only purpose in calling me to the *Himālayas* from time to time was to maintain my enthusiasm and industriousness and strengthen my faith in the efficacy of *tapaścaryā*.

By doing *sādhanā* on Bhagirath Shila in Gangotri I got the power to launch *Pragyā abhiyān* and thus help in the descent of *Gyān Gangā* (stream of knowledge) on this earth. While I was in the *Āśram* of Parshuram in Uttarkashi, I got the battle-axe with the help of which I could create turbulence and anger in the minds of the people against widespread perversion. According to the scriptures, Parashuram had beheaded several tyrants a number of times. My activity was confined to annihilation of evil tendencies lodged in the human mind. *Vicār-krāntī* and *Pragyā abhiyān* are not only creative but also reformative. Both these objectives have been achieved on a large scale with great success by the power of *tapaścaryā* and not by any miracle or coincidence.

This is a summary of the past activities. I have now been directed by *Gurudev*, to whose tune I have been dancing as a puppet throughout my life, to make a big leap in this direction. Now I have to enter into a new higher level of *tapaścaryā*. The general public knows only that I am living in seclusion and not meeting anybody. This information is incomplete. A person whose whole being is full of diligence, industriousness, punctuality and order, cannot live a useless inactive life, as is being assumed. I am required to do comparatively far more work and I remain far more busier while living in seclusion. Although I have adopted the practice of not meeting people, I have established contact with many illumined, immortal souls, whose company I have aspired to enjoy perennially, and which would not have been possible in the normal course. How can it then be said to be a life of seclusion? There has been only a change in the method of working. The type of persons who used to meet me and the subjects of the meetings have

changed. Mystics always adopt such methods. They appear to be inactive, although they remain extremely busy. When a top (*laṭṭū*) revolves with full speed it appears to be standing motionless. The fact that it is in motion can be noticed only when its speed is slowed down and it starts stumbling and falling.

In those days when Einstein was busy in conducting important research he had changed his entire routine of life. He used to live all alone in a huge building where all facilities were available. All the books, literature, instruments of research, assistants and colleagues were readily available at hand, but they were kept away from him so that Einstein's concentration may not be disturbed. He used to ring a bell and get everything which he wanted through his attendant. Visitors waited for months to see him. It was only thus that it became possible for him to make his valuable contributions to humanity which amazed the entire world. The *Riṣis* and *tapasvīs* also lived a similar life in seclusion in the ancient times. They were engaged in conducting researches on several planes relating to spiritual science. They used to select some quiet secluded place and got absorbed in their work with full concentration.

I have also been directed to do some very important new type of tasks. The first is to activate the dormant spiritual power to neutralise the probability of a worldwide holocaust. The second is to provide necessary inspiration and strength to constructive workers (*srajan śilpīs*) without which they will be unable to do their work satisfactorily. Third is to initiate and raise the structure of those righteous tendencies which will act as guidelines in building the new era. All these tasks cannot be performed all alone through the physical body which has a limited range of power to meet physical needs and can render help to a limited number of proximate persons. It is necessary to develop the astral and causal bodies for doing more important and extensive work. When all these three bodies become equally strong and active then alone it will be possible to accomplish the momentous deeds in accordance with the will of the 'Time Spirit' (*Mahākāl*).

Ramakrishna Paramhansa was placed almost under similar circumstances. He was required to accomplish a task of worldwide dimensions. As per plan, he transfused his power into Vivekananda and took upon himself the responsibility of making the task of the latter easy and successful from behind the scene. Such a stupendous task could not have been accomplished through the physical body. He, therefore, abandoned it without hesitation. He had also overspent his energies by liberally conferring boons. He

voluntarily got afflicted with cancer, discharged his debt and got engaged in doing the work through Vivekananda, who did it all according to the direction of his Supreme Master? When Ramakrishna withdrew to the astral realm, his physical absence caused pain and sadness. But all that had happened was for the greatest Good. After his physical death Ramakrishna's power had increased a thousandfold and many righteous works were done not only in the country but in the whole world. When he was alive he could give his blessings to some disciples and transfuse his spiritual powers into Vivekananda but when he got the opportunity to act through the astral and causal bodies he could do far greater works, which can be hardly understood or quantified.

The life of Jesus Christ has also been of the same type. He struggled hard throughout his life but could make only thirteen persons as his disciples. When he found that his physical body would not be able to do as much work as he wanted, he took the help of his astral body and invisibly helped in the spread of Christianity throughout the world. On such occasions great persons voluntarily choose painful death to clear their past accounts. Crucifixion of Christ, taking poison by Socrates, Shri Krishna's getting hit by an arrow, Pandavas getting frozen in the *Himālayas*, Gandhi's being shot, are all events which indicate that all great persons who want to enter from the physical into the astral form to accomplish still greater tasks give up their bodies in such a manner that it be regarded as a martyr's death and inspire generations to come. This has happened with me and is going to happen also in future.

CHAPTER 12

TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL INTO ASTRAL – *SUKSMĪKARANA*

Ours are momentous times of a revolutionary change of an era. I have been divinely directed to act as a dynamic agent, over the next twenty years, to ensure a smooth transition to the *Golden Era* that is beckoning humanity. The work which has been done during the past eight years since 1980 is much more than what was done during the preceding thirty years. Due alertness and wisdom have been exercised, so that the needed energy (resources) was available to carry out the tasks in hand. One can hardly describe the vigilance, concentration, resoluteness and industriousness with which these eight years have ben spent. The establishment of 2,400 *Pragyāpīṭhas*. 12,000 *Pragyā sansthāns* and writing of one folder daily

are the directly visible manifestations of this work but all the rest is invisible, indirect, which cannot be accounted for in visible terms.

There are still twelve years left of this transitional period of *Yug-sandhi*. The wheel of change will move with far greater and baffling speed during this period. It will be necessary to minimise destruction and promote refinement and growth. At present the speed of both these phenomena is slow and with such a speed it will not be possible to attain the goal by 2000 A.D. The speed will, therefore, have to be accelerated. In this, I have to play the necessary role of a vulture and a squirrel. In times of war the responsibilities of a commander and a cook are equally important. Nobody can ignore or disregard his duties in days of emergency.

It will be necessary to simultaneously fight on several fronts during this time. Reaping of harvest, feeding the cattle, treating the sick son, attending the court on the date of hearing, welcoming a guest visiting the house and such other chores are sometimes required to be attended to by a householder at the same time. During war, the responsibility of the commander becomes all the more grave. He has to decide on the number of soldiers to be deployed on a particular front, make arrangements for regular supply of arms, ammunition, and rations; ensure that the hospital is kept well-equipped, well-stocked with medicines, well-manned to attend to the injured; make speedy arrangements for disposal of the dead; and also prepare trenches for the next encounter. Attention has to be paid simultaneously to all these aspects. If there is any weak or missing link in the chain, the whole battle strategy will collapse.

I have been asked to enormously expand and diversify my activities and the physical frame is becoming more and more a limitation and a hurdle in the execution of the new tasks. It is limited and can work only in a limited sphere when the actual work which has to be done extends over a vast infinite sphere. How can this be done? One of the ways is that the physical body be abandoned and whatever has to be done be accomplished with the help of one or more astral bodies. If my director will consider it expedient to do so, no time will be lost in actualising it. There is one drawback of the physical body, that the law of *karma-phal* (result of one's own deeds) always pursues it. If there is any balance of give-and-take, it is carried forward to the next birth and has to be settled there.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa had granted boons and blessings in abundance, far in excess of the accumulated capital, and so he had to invoke cancer to

settle the account. Mahatma Narayan Swami had also to suffer such a disease. Guru Golvalkar died of cancer. There are several such instances in which pious, holy persons had to spend their last days in physical agony. This is not the result of their sins. Such great persons take the miseries of others on themselves. If they are unable to repay, they settle the account in their last days, thus leaving no balance of *karma-phal* for future.

The basic question is of *sūkṣmīkaraṇa* (transformation into astral state) of human soul. S*ūkṣma* is more extensive, comprehensive and multifarious. It can simultaneously work at various places and discharge various responsibilities. Physical body has the limitations of space, time, language etc. By entering into the astral (s*ūkṣma*) plane, all these limitations disappear and exchange of thoughts becomes easier. Thoughts can be directly communicated in the astral plane and language does not act as a barrier. This is the greatest convenience. It is only the physical body that has the necessity of migration and movement from place to place. A man can hardly walk about three miles in an hour. A person has only one tongue with which he can speak and express himself. But there is no limitation in respect of the organs of the astral body. Its powers of vision, hearing and speaking are several times more in comparison to those of the physical body. An astral body can transform itself or appear in several bodies. At the time of *rās*, Shri Krishna appeared to be dancing simultaneously with several *gopīs*. At the time of death of Kans and *svayamvar* of Seeta people saw Krishna and Ram in different figures. What Arjun and Yashoda had seen was nothing but a glimpse of the astral, causal, celestial forms of *Bhagvān* Krishna.

It is not possible for every one to attain this stage after leaving his physical body. Evil spirits, ghosts do remain in astral form but they remain in a crude natural state. They can simply indicate their needs to persons who are related to them. The souls of the level of *pitars* (deceased ancestors) are more capable as compared to the ghosts and their behaviour and wisdom are more lofty on account of maturity. Special efforts of the standard of *tapasyā* are needed to make the astral body highly refined and elevated. The next step on the path to upgrade an ordinary human being to the level of *siddha puruṣa* is *sūkṣmīkaraṇa*. Such persons, while living within the confines of a physical body, acquire divine powers and with them they serve and help others. But there are also persons who acquire *siddhis* which are described as *aṇimā*, *mahimā*, *laghimā* etc. in the *Yog-śastra*. So long as physical body is there it cannot become lighter or heavier, visible or invisible nor can a man fly in the air or walk on water due to the inbuilt limitations of

the body cells. If somebody narrates such *siddhis* on the basis of rumour or hearsay it should be regarded as hyperbolic.

The question is of *sādhanā* which I am doing at present. It is a special *sādhanā* which can be done while living in the physical body also and has to be continued even after abandoning it. This stage cannot be attained without heightened, concentrated self-effort, *tapaścaryā* and *sādhanā*. This can be regarded as the next phase of *yogābhyāsa tapaścaryā*.

What has to be done for this depends upon the present stage of growth of the aspirant and the level of guidance available to him. There cannot be one uniform curriculum for all. But one must restrain himself from misuse of the powers gifted to him by divine grace for egoistic purposes. An egg remains in the shell so long as it does not get matured. But as soon as it gets matured it breaks the outer shell, comes out and starts running and flying. The practice of *sūkṣmīkaraṇa* is almost similar. In ancient times people lived in caves and practised *samādhī* for this very purpose.

Detailed description is found in ancient scriptures about souls living in astral bodies. There is such a description in *Mahābhārat* in a question-answer dialogue between Yudhishthir and Yakshya. *Yakṣyas*, *Gandharvas*, *Brahmarākṣas* were all different categories of souls living in astral bodies. Five *Veers* used to live with Vikramaditya. The attendants (*gaṇs*) of *Bhagvān* Shiv are known as *Vīrbhadras*. Ghosts (*bhūts*), *prets*, *masāṇs* are of different category. Those who have read the lamp of Allaudin can get information about these types of people. In *chāyapuruṣa sādhanā*, separate entity is created from one's own person which works as a powerful invisible colleague of the *sādhak*.

Most of the souls living in astral bodies have been described as malevolent or of a lower order of creation. It is likely that in those days warriors with unfulfilled desires at the time of their violent death became such low-level astral souls. But, side by side, ancient scriptures are full of descriptions about *Devarṣis* living in astral bodies. *Rajarṣis* and *Brahmarṣis* were those who lived in physical body; but those amongst them who had the capacity to work in astral bodies also were known as *Devarṣis*. They could assume ethereal forms and roam in space and other *lokas* (subtle cosmic worlds). They could suddenly appear at any place to give guidance to the devotees and seekers. References are available about several *Riṣis* who were not restricted to walk on the ground only. Even at present several travellers in the *Himālayan* region narrate that on losing their way someone guided them

to their destination. Several persons have seen invisible *yogīs* appearing and disappearing in the caves and on the hilltops. Such stories are prevalent about the *lāmās* of Tibet also. The Theosophical Society is of the view that even at present there is a group of *Devarṣis* in the central parts of the *Himālayas* who are engaged in the task of achieving universal peace. They have termed them as 'Invisible Helpers'.

It has to be borne in mind that this community of *Devarṣis* is an extraordinarily evolved type of beings. Like *yogīs* and *siddha puruṣas*, they are far more capable, as compared to human beings, in rendering service and help. But it is wrong to assume that they are omnipotent and are capable of instantly fulfilling the desires of or conferring boons on any person. The rule of *karm-phal* (result of one's own actions) is paramount which can be reduced or negated by God alone. It is beyond the power of man. Just as a physician rushes to help a patient, a rich man helps a poor and needy person, in the same way *Devarṣis* living in astral bodies rush, from time to time, whether they are called upon or not, for promoting righteous attitudes and deeds. Still, none should take it for granted that personal effort or industriousness is not necessary.

Here, the best example is of *Gurudev* who lives in the *Himālayas*. As he lives in his astral form he can live in environments where there are no adequate means for maintaining physical life. He guides and helps me from time to time. This does not mean that I was not required to do anything or did not face any difficulty or was never unsuccessful. But it is certain that I would not have been able to achieve all this with my own limited human capacities. With his divine help and guidance my enthusiasm and morale have been far more higher and I have overcome the trials and difficulties of the path with unflinching faith and infinite patience and courage. This is not insignificant. Only this much should be expected from others. It should not be expected even from God that He would come and even do the self-effort on our behalf. Whenever one refers to divine help, people think that it is a magic stick which does all the work simply by waving it. This is an illusion. Such credulous people lose their faith easily. We should expect timely help from divine powers, from astral souls but should also be prepared to discharge our responsibilities. Failures and difficulties should be regarded as lessons to be learnt and the next step should be taken with greater caution and courage.

Astral bodies are more powerful than the physical ones. They can see and hear things from a great distance. They can visualise future events and they

possess the power of conveying their thoughts to others. They have helped several persons in overcoming adversities. Just like our visible world, there is an invisible world linked with it which is inhabited by beings with astral bodies. Some of them are quite ordinary, some are mischievous, while some are of highly elevated level. These elevated souls take interest in the affairs of mankind. They extend help in reforming evil persons and in making good persons still better.

This is all about beings with astral bodies and the astral world in general. The primary aim is of spiritual refinement, elevation and upliftment. Ours are extremely critical times. Elevated souls living in the material world are doing all that is within their power to do but it appears that this will not be enough. Powerful beings on astral planes will have to use all their powers in not allowing those who are possessed by evil tendencies to slip further down the abyss. The process which is going on, on the physical plane, to reform these perverted souls is not adequate. Invisible help is needed to make it easier and more successful. This will be necessary for the solution of collective problems, as also for making persons who are engaged in righteous pursuits, shine out with still greater glory and strength.

Ever since I have been entrusted with such a work, there has never been any dilly-dallying or let-up. I have been working for quite a long time now on the guidelines given by my divine guide and this will continue till I am alive. It is necessary to make herculean efforts to free the visible and the invisible spheres from the strangle-hold of the poisonous grip of the evil forces. For this something drastic has to be done, as was done by Hanuman, in the ancient times, by uprooting a mountain and procuring the plant possessing the power to revive life. I was required to get immediately engaged in awakening and activating the dormant divine energies involved in the physical body; and in the pursuit of this aim, I have resorted to severe *tapaścaryā* (*sādhanā* in seclusion).

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CHAPTER 13

THAT WHICH I AM DOING AT PRESENT

Gurudev is always with me, he is within me and he satisfies all my curiosities and queries. Right from the translation of ancient scriptures to the writing of *Pragyā Purāṇa* he has been guiding me like a teacher. My tongue repeats his teachings. I have been acting like a horse who changes his direction and speed on signals given by its rider. When he calls me to the *Himālayas* to recharge my battery he does so without saying anything special. My achievements are similar to those of a weak person who improves his health by living in a sanatorium.

This time, I thoroughly understood the process of *sūkṣmīkaraṇa*. Just as Kunti had given birth to divine progeny, I will have to transform my *Annamaya kośa*, *Prāṇmaya kośa*, *Manomaya kośa*, *Vigyānmaya kośa* and *Ānandmaya kośa* present within my physical body into five *Vīrbhadras*. I have understood the process of this *sādhanā*. I have been asked to remain in Shantikunj, transfer all my responsibilities to others and retain this physical body as a nest of these five *Vīrbhadras* till they become fully powerful. The process of *Sāvitrī-sādhanā* has also been started for this purpose according to the instructions of *Gurudev*. I have also got the answer as to the work that would have to be entrusted to these five *Vīrbhadras* and how they would function.

There are even today several geniuses who will be able to do comparatively much more important work than they are doing now, if their minds are diverted to higher ideals. For this a mighty power is required. This work will be done by my five *Vīrbhadras* and the transformation in human thinking will be miraculous.

Narada changed the course of lives of Parvati, Dhruva, Prahlad, Valmiki, Savitri etc. who abandoned their past activities, took to righteous paths and set examples worth emulation by others. *Bhagvān* Buddha changed the hearts of Anand, Kumar Jeev, Angulimal, Ambapali, Ashok, Harshvardhan, Sanghmitra; and they dedicated themselves to the path of spirituality shown by the Enlightened One, and became renowned throughout the world. Vishwamitra made Harishchandra so great that simply by seeing a drama based on his life, Gandhi became venerable for all the world. Bhamashah, a great miser, donated all his treasure to Maharana Pratap, having been inspired by saint Vithoba. Adya Shankaracharya inspired Mandhata to build

maṭhs in all the four *dhāms*. Ahilyabai, inspired by a saint, renovated several temples and ghats and built up new temples at several places which were inaccessible and far beyond the reach of the people. Hardly could have Shivaji played so historic a role if he had not been inspired by Samarth Guru Ramdas. It was Ramakrishna Paramhansa who pursued Narendra and metamorphosed him into a Vivekananda. The credit for diverting the mind of Raja Gopichand towards renunciation goes to saint Bhartahari. History is full of such examples of transformation through the inspiration of illumined souls.

This has happened in my case also. If *Gurudev* had not inspired and metamorphosed me, I would have also been following the profession of a *pandit* (priest) or some other activity like other members of my family and would not have attained the present position. Persons who are geniuses in their fields, are needed to facilitate the change of the era. Learned people are needed, who may, by their logic, facts and figures, provide a new way of thinking to the people. Artists are needed who may inspire people to imbibe the teachings and lives of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Meera, Soor, Kabir. Affluent persons are needed who may, instead of squandering away their money in luxurious living, give away their all to fulfil the noble aims of the *Time Spirit*. Statesmen are needed who may, like Gandhi, Rousseau, Karl Marx, Lenin etc. guide people to follow new, revolutionary ways of ensuring equality, fraternity and freedom for all. What to speak of illumined souls, saints, sages, savants and seers? They have totally transformed persons who came in their contact, just as a *pāras* stone, by a simple touch, converts iron into gold.

My *Vīrbhadras* will do all this. I have also done the same. I have radically changed the thoughts and activities of millions of people and prepared them like *satyāgrahīs* of Gandhi, *bhūdānīs* of Vinoba, *parivrājaks* of Buddha, to sacrifice everything for the sake of a noble cause. The army of *Pragyā-putras* are playing the role of monkeys of Hanuman. When miracles have been played by my direct physical activities there is no reason why these *Vīrbhadras*, who are part and parcel of my soul, will not be able to persuade and inspire innumerable persons to turn towards nobility and sublimity of soul.

It will be necessary in the near future to eradicate several evil tendencies. For this, persons like Arjun will be needed who may defeat and decimate *akṣouhiṇī* (well-equipped) army of the Kauravas. Hanumans will be needed who may by setting fire to their tails to burn Lanka, the fortress of Evil, and

turn it to ashes. Such changes are possible by changing the inner consciousness of human beings. Abraham Lincoln and George Washington of America were born in very ordinary families but they changed the course of their lives and became the Presidents of America.

Leaving apart vicious persons who apply their intellect in acts like theft, dacoity, cheating etc. persons full of noble emotions and sentiments can do a lot in changing the era by their heroic efforts, courage and industriousness. Swami Dayananda, Sharddhananda, Ramteerth etc. were capable of changing the course of life of innumerable persons.

These days intelligent persons are engrossed in luxuriousness, accumulation of wealth and satisfaction of their ego and thus all their powers and resources are being frittered away. If only a few of them are able to turn around towards fulfilling noble and high aims, they can do such marvellous and exemplary work as was done by Jaidayal Goyanka of Geeta Press, Gorakhpur.

Which intelligent person has to be changed? How he has to be changed? What work has to be taken from him? These are matters which are decided at the higher level. Those who are at present thinking in terms of a world war causing utter devastation will, on getting their minds changed, think in terms of utilising their intellect, power and resources for creative purposes. This will bring salutary changes in the environment. When tendencies and directions of the minds have changed, actions and activities of such persons will also be completely changed. Persons going ahead on the path of righteousness are bound to get divine help. They can then do miracles like Baba Amte, Hiralal Shastri, Laxmibai etc.

Perversion of intellect has made all human activities vicious, sinful and of criminal nature. Whatever is earned is squandered immediately in undesirable acts. If someone is able to change the thoughts, ways, attitudes and tendencies of such persons they can become so great that millions of people may consider themselves fortunate by following in their footprints.

As a result of my *Sāvitrī-sādhanā*, which is going on at present, invisible *mahābalīs* are being prepared who will slowly and silently enter into the inner consciousness of innumerable persons and will not rest contented until immorality has not been completely banished from human scene. This will result in the creation of human gems and rubies who will make the task of changing of the era, which appears to be very difficult at present, much easier.

My direct role as a Manīṣī

A man is elevated with the help of his inner power. It is equally true that the atmosphere purified by *tapaścaryā* and endurance, education, proximity and advice of noble persons also play very important roles. It has been observed that even most ordinary and least competent persons act heroically and accomplish tasks which are otherwise impossible for them to do, if they identify themselves with the irresistible and all-conquering force of a great and noble ideal, inspired by the *Time Spirit (Mahākāl)*, which has fired the imagination, mind and the heart of society at a particular time. In the ancient times *Manīṣīs* and *Munis* (spiritually evolved saints and thinkers) used to play this role. They used to remain absorbed in *Yug- sādhanā* and through the effective medium of pen and speech they used to sublimate and inspire the thoughts of the people. Such *sādhaks* created several elevated persons, awakened their dormant powers, moulded them in the right direction and brought about salutary changes in the society. Although such persons were apparently like ordinary people, they were highly superior in terms of elevation of soul, illumined intelligence, refined emotions and dedication to higher ideals.

It is well- known that *Munis* and *Riṣis* have been regarded as two types of geniuses in the spiritual field. *Riṣis* were those who were engaged in *tapaścaryā* and conducted spiritual research and thereby guided the common masses. Those who focused on progressive refinement and sharpening of human mind and intellect by their thinking, contemplation and intensive study were known as *Munis*. One was a symbol of piety (*Riṣi*) and the other of brilliance (*Munis*). Both of them had to do intensive *tapaścaryā* and *sādhanā* to become extremely refined so that by making themselves spiritually powerful and expansive they could completely change the trend of the minds and hearts of the people. While *Munis* are at liberty to use physical resources and means, the same is not necessary for *Riṣis* who can also work in the astral form and exert their energies from there to surcharge the atmosphere with noble *sanskārs*.

Ordinarily, by *Manīṣīs* people understand a great man, *Mahāpragyā* whose mind is under his control, who is not guided by the impulses of his mind but guides it. Such a person is known as *Manīṣī* and his *pragyā* (divine intellect and intuition) as *manīṣā* (spiritual wisdom). It is stated in the scriptures, *manīṣā asti yeśām te manīṣī naḥ*. But side by side it has also been stated, *manīṣī nastu bhavānti, pāvnānī na bhavanti*, which means that there are

so many *manīṣīs* who are very sharp of intellect but it is not necessary that they may be holy or pious also. One may be intelligent but it is a different thing to be not only intelligent but also have a pious and pure inner consciousness. Today a large number of editors, intellectuals, writers, investigators, scientists are scattered throughout the country but they are not *Manīṣīs*. Why? Because they have not performed *tapaścaryā* to acquire piety by inner purification.

There is no dearth of books, literature etc. these days. Looking to the plethora of newspapers, magazines, journals etc., which are being published these days, it would appear as if the number of *Manīṣīs* and, their readers have increased manifold. Why then are these publications not having healthy impact on the minds of their readers? The reason can obviously be found in the aforesaid dictum *pāvnānī na bhavanti*. If literature of high standards had been written and published to uplift and refine thoughts and feelings one would not have found so much perversion and chaos in the society. The right solution to the day-to-day problems lies in the hands of *Yug-manīṣīs*.

As I have stated earlier, the new era will dawn by refinement of thoughts and emotions. If there has to be any revolution it will not be through shedding blood but by eliminating the base instincts and thoughts embedded in the human psyche and their substitution by refined, noble and uplifting thoughts and feelings. If a new society of nobler and higher order is to be formed it will be possible only by the implanting of righteous thoughts and feelings. The so-called intelligentsia are responsible for making the present society utterly debased. The intelligentsia has played a prominent role in creating hatred, riots, ill-will, racialism and extensive human bloodshed. Had they followed the righteous path, had their hearts been pure, had they been purified by *tapaścaryā*, they would have created a constructive flow of scientific achievements and had written high-quality inspiring literature. When Hitler intended to give material shape to Nietzsche's theory of dictatorship he, first of all, turned the minds of the people of the entire nation towards it. The teachers and scientists became fanatic supporters of Nazism and this negative ideology of 'Mein Kemph' was propagated through the curricula and newspapers of the country. The entire nation became a victim of this fanaticism and this frenzy of racial superiority resulted not only in widespread human destruction but ultimately ruined the country itself. If this *manīṣā* had been turned in the right direction, it would have helped Germany in attaining unheard of prosperity and all-round progress.

Karl Marx, who was economically indigent throughout his life, propounded

an economic theory that revolutionised the whole society. The castles of capitalism were demolished and death knell of imperialism was sounded in almost two-thirds of the entire world. His book *Das Kapital* inaugurated the beginning of a new era in which the rights of the workers were recognised and a new chapter of equitable distribution of money and materials was opened. Millions of people thus got an opportunity to lead a happy life of self-reliance. Had the ideology of Rousseau not so widely influenced the masses, the philosophy of universal franchise and majority rule would not have gained ground and the rule of "might is right" would have continued unchecked. The supremacy of crude *jāgīrdārs* and rulers would have still continued according to the tradition of inheritance. Thus, it is due to the revolution inspired by *manīṣā* that colonisers were swept away and colonial rule was abolished. In this context, I have always been referring to the name of Lady Hariot Stow, along with those of Lincoln and Luther King, whose writings helped the black people in freeing themselves from the clutches of slavery. Obviously this was the role played by *Yug-manīṣā*.

The revolution brought about by the insights of Buddha was based on wisdom, farsightedness and morality. The hurricane of the movement for independence raised by Gandhi, Patel and Nehru was the indirect result of the *manīṣā* which had by its tremendous force metamorphosed the era. Not all these great persons had written volumes of thought- provoking literature. What they achieved was possible only when they played the role of *Munis*, awakened their dormant inner energies and created so much power in their thoughts and feelings that the whole atmosphere was surcharged with a great ideal.

Circumstances are also quite disconcerting these days. To save humanity, which is swinging, pendulum-like, between prosperity and total destruction, it is necessary to undertake the herculean labour to fathom the deepest depths of perennial values to re-establish supremacy of human dignity and spiritual wisdom. It is erroneous to think that material resources will be able to accomplish this work. Spirituality alone can flush out inner perversions. I have made *manīṣā* alone the medium to instil piety and brilliance in human beings and have visualised the dream of a golden future.

To give proper direction to human thinking, I have given priority in my future programme to the creation of an irresistible current of noble thoughts that would instantly wash away all the impurities and evil tendencies entrenched in the collective human psyche. Viciousness has overpowered the minds of the people these days. To change this atmosphere such awakened

persons are needed who could play the roles of *Munis* and *Riṣis* like Vyas, Buddha, Gandhi, Karl Marx, Martin Luther, Aurobindo, Maharshi Raman; and fulfil the aim of *Vicār Krānti* (revolution in thought) through direct or indirect efforts. This is possible only by mighty inner *tapaścaryā-sādhanā* whose visible manifestation will be the energy of *Yug-manīṣā* which by its power would write literature of highest standard capable of transforming the present era. It is my moral duty to continue working towards the fulfilment of the pledge which I had taken forty-seven years back to disseminate the insights revealed to me through the medium of *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti*.

While indirectly playing the role of a *Yug-Riṣi*, it was in my mind to prepare facilities for authentic research in regard to integration of science and spirituality, which is convincing on the basis of logic, facts and scientifically verified results. How research work should be conducted in respect of investigations into deeper realms of Soul-Spirit? What is the scientific basis of *sādhanā* and *upāsanā*? How could mental faculties be trained and developed by *sādhanā*? How could medical science of the ancient *Riṣis* (*Ayurveda*) be revived for restoration and maintenance of physical and mental health? How does the power of sound produced by uttering *Gāyatrī mantra* and the energy produced by the fire of *yagya* make a person pious and powerful and how is his body energised with life-force to make him capable of struggling against adverse circumstances? How could humanity be benefited in the present times by conducting fresh researches and experiments in matters relating to astronomical science? I have given new forms to such aspects of research, which are being conducted here according to the *Atharva Vedīya Riṣi* traditions. I have made a beginning and created a model as a guideline for the intelligentsia. I will go on encouraging and guiding all these efforts indirectly. It is my hope that the entire community of scientists would think and move ahead in this direction so that they may be able to apply their *pragyā* in conducting research in the realm of spiritual science. My determination to be of benefit to mankind by my *manīṣā* and researches is taking a concrete shape during my ongoing *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā*, the results of which will be known in future.

My prophecy is that there will not be destruction but creation

All prominent persons of clear vision have predicted in their own way that the coming years were most crucial and critical. In *Bible* there is reference to '*Seven Times*' as the time of destruction of the world. It coincides with the present times. In *Islam* there is reference to a great crisis in the fourteenth

century of the *Hijri* Era. *Bhaviṣya Pūrāṇa* has also predicted outbreak of catastrophic conditions during these days. Similar prophecies have been made in *Guru Granth Sāhib*. The famous poet, Soordas has foretold about the world facing calamities during these days. There are similar forebodings in the carvings on the pyramids of Egypt. Several Indian prophets have also made such prophecies on spiritual as well as on astrological basis.

Soothsayers like Jeane Dixon, Prof. Harary Anderson, John Baverie, Cheiro, Arthur Clerk, Nostradamus, Mother Shrimpton, Anandacharya, who have great influence in the western countries and whose predictions have been ninety-nine percent correct, have also predicted horrible possibilities.

In an international conference of occultists held sometime back in Korea, similar dreadful possibilities were hinted at. A conference of the specialists of the whole world in the science of future foretelling (futurologists) was held in Toronto, Canada in which it was stated that we are very close to a holocaust. Those who are said to be experts in the science of astronomy have expressed the view that the spots appearing on the Sun and frequency of solar eclipses will have harmful effects on the life on earth. The appearance of the comet named 'Hailee' in the beginning of 1985 is also said to be harmful to the inhabitants of the earth on account of its poisonous gases.

People having ordinary common sense know that due to exponential growth in human population not only food and water will become scarce but people will not get even space to live in and walk on. Due to over-industrialisation and mechanization, air and water have become poisonous and scarce. Mineral oil, metals and coal will not last even for fifty years more. On account of radiation due to nuclear explosions the present and future generations will suffer from dangerous diseases like cancer. If there is outbreak of a nuclear war, not only humanity but also other species and vegetation will be wiped out. The imbalance in temperature is likely to create storms in the oceans on account of melting of ice in the polar regions. Thus, the prospects of the return of ice-age are being predicted. The sum and substance of all this is that there is definitely going to be some terrible turmoil and upheaval. There is a forecast about the change of the era in 2000 A.D. Thus one can easily imagine about the possibility of destruction before new-creation, of melting before moulding.

Statesmen and journalists are also worried very much about such a disastrous prospect befalling the globe. Several global organizations and peace missions are busy at present in devising ways and means to avert the danger of total annihilation. In the past also there had been wars between the *Devtās* and

Asuras but a possibility of utter destruction, as looming large at present, had never arisen before.

This dire prospect is not hidden from the divine vision of *Riṣis* who are living in their astral bodies. They cannot remain mute and helpless spectators at such a crucial time. *Riṣis* do not perform *tapaścaryā* for attaining heaven, liberation or *siddhis*. Even worldly persons can attain these boons through occult practices. *Riṣis* have undertaken the responsibility of doing God's work and they remain ever vigilant in the performance of this divinely assigned task.

The divine powers of the *Riṣis*, who are extremely kind to me, have got all the work, including the performance of twenty-four *Mahāpuraścaraṇas* of *Gāyatrī*, done through me for the welfare of mankind. They are concerned about the gathering clouds of a total holocaust which are hovering at present over the whole earth and they are seriously trying to avert it. One of the steps in this direction is to fill me up with unalloyed spiritual purity, power and brilliance.

The present phase of *sūkṣmīkaraṇa* is going on in the form of *Sāvitrī sādhanā*. This has nothing to do with ego-centred fame, prosperity, superiority or magnificence of a particular individual. The only aim is to make the faltering steps of upward human growth and human dignity firm. This can be accomplished by five *Vīrbhadras* to whom this task has been entrusted. Ram and Laxman had sat on the shoulders of Hanuman. This is nothing but giving credit to or choosing a medium. How could the great battle of *Mahābhārat* have been fought on the basis of a single *Gāndīv* Bow? It will be regarded an impossible task by ordinary common sense. But what God wills gets fulfilled anyhow. A strong man like Hiranyakasha was torn to pieces by *Bhagvān* Varaha.

It is my personal vision that this time also the demoniac forces will not be allowed to succeed. Those who are at present involved in destruction will be transformed and become co-operators of the forces of new creation or new persons will be born to overturn them and in this way the transformation will be effected. India is destined to play a prominent role in establishing real world peace, securely founded on conscious spiritual unity in diversity.

While many prominent and great thinkers are apprehending annihilation, it is my emphatic prophecy that the Evil, which in reality is an inverted form of Good, will be reconverted into the original Good; that which is topsy-turvy at present will be set aright. Let this statement of mine be taken with

the seriousness it deserves. The dark clouds of evil tendencies created by unbridled scientific advancement will be blown away by a forceful hurricane of divine tendencies. Darkness will be dispelled and eternal light will shine forth. This is possible only through the irresistible and invisible power of the *Riṣis*.

It should be taken for granted that the collective will of ordinary people is mighty. Public opinion exercises strong pressure. Those who are today capable of causing harm will have to yield before awakened public opinion. *Pragyā abhiyān* has launched the movement of awakening and energising public opinion. This will go on increasing and becoming more and more powerful and the minds of the people will be changed for the better. People will think of utilising their efficiency and skills for growth rather than for destruction. Intelligence is a great power. It preforms miracles in whichever direction it is directed.

Daunting problems of the present times – pollution, amassing of weapons of colossal mass destruction, universal naked dance of immorality and self-indulgence, natural calamities – are all interlinked. It is not possible to solve them in isolation. Solutions have to be found for all of them together. With the requisite determination, willpower and insight the solutions will be found.

There are two main powers which make or mar. One is the power of arms and money and the other is the power of illumined intelligence and organisation. People have been, in the past, subdued by and made subservient to the power of arms and money and have been compelled to act against their wishes. This is demoniac power. In future divine power has to be invoked and tapped so that people may experience the influence of the power of love, awakened intelligence and enlightened organisation. People will then see the miracles that divine power can perform, when yoked for the achievement of high creative aims.

Justice should get due respect. Moral and ethical values should get proper recognition. All should live together harmoniously and with love; should have the spontaneous urge for mutual sharing and caring. When these principles will be accepted by the people at large in right earnest, they will get proper direction. New strategies will then be devised and the goal of universal peace, goodwill and prosperity will ultimately be attained.

If the two principles of *ātmavat sarvabhūteṣu* (seeing one's own *Ātmān* in all forms of life) and *vasudhaiva kuṭuṁbakaṁ* (to consider oneself as

member of one integrated global family) are followed, people will immediately be able to know which are undesirable tendencies and vices lodged inside themselves and how much struggle and courage is required to get rid of them. Human capacity for progress and growth is unlimited. Once a person makes up his mind to work for a high, noble and sublime aim there is nothing difficult for him to achieve.

There is going to be one world, one language, one religion and one culture in the near future. The day is not far off when discrimination on account of colour, caste, class, sex and money will end. It will intuitively occur to the people across the whole world what has to be done to achieve this goal; and awakened and empowered persons will play a leading role in the accomplishment of this heroic task. Such a time is coming soon. We should eagerly and expectantly look forward to its arrival and consciously prepare ourselves to play our assigned roles in the divine drama.

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CHAPTER 14

MY REQUEST AND ASSURANCE TO MY OWN PEOPLE

I have resolved to apply the powers gifted to me by divine Grace and acquired by *sādhanā* in shaking and transforming eminent persons of the world in the various fields of human endeavour. These include politicians in power, wealthy persons, scientists, *Manīṣīs* etc. They will be of ordinary looking level as well as of topmost level. Those who are at the topmost level are mostly egoistic and rigidly opinionated. I am not confining my action to persons of topmost level but even ordinary looking persons of the aforesaid four types are being taken up within the orbit of the transforming force.

The second category within whom I propose to work is of awakened souls who are mostly born in India. No other country has produced so many great men, *Riṣis*, *Manīṣīs*, *Devtās* as India has done. It will be my endeavour to convey the message of *Yug-dharma* to souls who have accumulated good *sanskārs* during their past births and will exhort them to come out of their

illusions and be contented with minimum resources to meet their personal basic needs. The seeds of whatever they possess extra should be sown and grown so that they could be reaped and multiplied thousand times. It will not be of practical significance if I restrict the applicability of this principle to myself alone. *Pragyā parivār* is large and far-flung and the fertility of India is also well-known. My scheme does not include India alone, it is global. It is, therefore, necessary that a community of awakened souls be available in every field of human endeavour in all the countries to make the campaign of transformation of thoughts (*Vicār Krānti Abhiyān*) widespread. The methods of working will vary in accordance with local conditions but the object will be one and the same, i.e. of cleansing, of sublimating and refining thoughts and emotions. This is the foundation of *Pragyā abhiyān*. We will try to reach the goal like a shooting arrow. Those of heroic and adventurous mould will feel the tug of a force awakening, goading and shaking them. The need of the times and their inner inspiration will also awaken such persons. Even a cock rises up and starts crowing in the small hours of early morning. There is, therefore, no reason why conscientious and courageous persons, full of loving kindness will not rise to the occasion and hear the call of *Mahākāl*. It is certain that my visible /invisible inspiration and the need of the times would jointly have the desired effect. It is visualised that a sizeable number of persons belonging to this category will emerge and will soon be visible.

The third category is of persons belonging to *Pragyā parivār* with whom I have personal attachment and deep affinity. People do not have, but I have the recollection of their other several past births. I have collected all such persons with whom I had intimate relationship in the past by coincidence or by deliberate efforts. *Akhaṇḍ Jyoti* and constructive programmes launched by this *mission* have been acting as uniting factors in this respect. There is mutual guardian-child bond of affection between us. Children, by their very nature, want something or the other from their guardians, whether it may or may not be useful or necessary. This affectionate tussle goes on till the children become mature enough to understand the difference between usefulness and futility.

Whether by faith or habit, there is such a strong bond between us that it is not limited merely to the exchange of thoughts and personal contacts. Several *parijans* are facing difficulties. Most of them are entangled in some problem or the other. Some persons want to be in better worldly conditions. There may be several reasons, but the fact remains that people come to me for the

fulfilment of some desire or aspiration and express it, with or without speech. Their faith is reassured when they find that what they wanted has been fulfilled, if not fully, at least partially.

This is not relationship of a beggar and a benefactor but of a guardian and his ward. If a calf does not suck the milk of its mother, a serious problem is created for the cow. It is not the cow alone which gives milk to the calf. The calf also gives something to its mother.

Although, outwardly, a regular record of membership of *Gāyatrī parivār*, *Pragyā parivār* is maintained and the condition of regular contribution is attached to it, the reality is that it is an intimate relationship of close affinity of past births of which I am well aware. In the background there are several miraculous events which I remember very well. Both the sides try to come closer and are always keen to do everything which can be done for the other. This is not mere imagination but a reality which is experienced by both from time to time.

This third category of persons, who are my children have, no doubt, helped the *mission* but it is a secondary matter. The main thing for me is how to get the joy of seeing them happy. Uptill now, we met, talked and enjoyed the company of each other but that facility has now been withdrawn. In this, there is no question of time or convenience. The only reason for this is that routine external contacts disturb the focus required in *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā* with which the fate of humanity is linked. If the matter had been about my own personal liberation or attainment of *siddhi* or heaven it could have been easily postponed. But the times are so critical that not a moment can be wasted. There is no alternative but to take up position on the front, like an honest soldier. *Parijans*, are therefore, requested to leave me alone with a view to enabling me to concentrate on *sūkṣmīkaraṇa sādhanā*.

I reassure all my children, *Pragyā-parijans*, that if they refine their inner consciousness a little they will feel a deep, intimate affinity with and proximity to me because my astral body will become more radiant and remain vibrantly alive till 2000 A.D. It will instantly reach wherever necessary and give the needed affection, cooperation, advice, guidance etc. There is not going to be the slightest change in my habit of helping people in their difficulties and in their *sādhanā*. They will get this benefit now to a greater extent.

My *Gurudev* lives in his astral body in the *Himālayas*. I have experienced his constant proximity for the last sixty-three years, although during this

time there were hardly a few occasions of three days each when I saw him face to face. But so far as faith and devotion are concerned, they were as intense as of Eklavya, Meera and Ramakrishna Paramhansa toward Dronacharya, Shri Krishna and Kali respectively. Those who will sublimate their feelings and devotion will find it comparatively easier to experience proximity to me.

Children do want something from the elders but the latter also expect something from them. They want the children to answer the call of nature at the appropriate place, follow etiquette, go to school for studies and observe similar other disciplines. I have also similar expectations. Shri Krishna had lifted *Govardhan* with the help of unpolished *gvāl-bāls*. Hanuman had gathered bears, monkeys for his help. I cannot, by myself alone, accomplish the task of new creation. This is a task which needs cooperation of others. When so-called wise persons did not come forward, I gathered a family of childlike persons and started doing whatever could be possible.

I have always been conscious of my duties and responsibilities towards my children. But there is only one thing to which I would like to draw the attention of the *parijans*. I want each one of them to contribute their time and resources to the maximum extent to the *mission,* because for accomplishing great works great persons and resources are needed. Every individual belonging to *Gāyatrī parivār* is potentially a great person. He has ignorantly worn a thin mask of smallness. His real face will be visible as soon as this mask is removed. The parable of a lion cub who was brought up in a herd of sheep applies to each one of the *Pragyā-parijans*.

My guide tore away in no time my garb of smallness and dressed me up with resplendent garments of greatness. For this rejuvenation, I had simply to get liberated from the slush of greed and illusion. I had to overlook the advice of others and summon up courage to accept the joint decision of my soul and God. Self-confidence to walk alone was aroused and I marched ahead, regarding high and noble ideals as symbols of God. After that, I never felt alone nor did I ever feel that I was being neglected or was without any resources. No sooner did I turn my face towards the truth, the fog of untruth disappeared.

My request to all the *parijans* is that they should not read this work as a mere narration of a life story. They should deeply ponder over it and take it as a saga of *siddhi* (self-realisation) achieved through *sādhanā* (self-discipline) and Divine Grace. They should also understand that my steps

have advanced in the pursuit of *Riṣi* traditions by presenting the path of spiritual awakening worthy of being followed by others. One should understand what the real nature of true spirituality is. A person will be benefited by spiritual realisation to the extent to which he will be able to integrate idealistically his inner illumination with outer brilliance.

My legacy and message to all my close and intimate *Pragyā-parijans* is that they should learn something from my life and find out the reality behind the process of my *sādhanā*. They should themselves examine how far I have succeeded and try to follow me intelligently and resolutely according to their capabilities. This is a bargain of profit, not of loss.

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Shriram Sharma Acharya, a pioneer of spiritual renaissance was born on 20th September 1911, in Anwalkheda, Agra District. He scrupulously carried out the biddings of his *Guru*, a great *Himalayan Yogi*, when he was fifteen years of age.

He took part in the struggle for independence as a volunteer, went to jail a number of times and embarked upon the task of social and moral upliftment through spiritual means in 1935 with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi.

A sage, a visionary and a reformer, the Acharya initiated 100 points *Yug Nirman Yojna*, lived a disciplined life of devout austerity, visited the Himalayas several times and attained spiritual eminence.

The *Gayatri Pariwar* fraternity; Shantikunj Ashram— an academy for for moral and spiritual awakening; Brahmavarchas Research Institute— which strives to synthesize science with spirituality and over 3000 social reform centres (*Shakti-peeths*) are his greatest contributions to the modern world.

He translated the entire *Vedic Vangmaya* and accopmplished a feat of writing more than 2700 books on all aspects of life.

The Acharya, Great devotee of *Gayatri* lived an ideal life for 80 years and voluntarily shed his physical sheath on *Gayatri Jayanti*, 2nd June 1990.

People might consider me a great scholar, a tapasvi, a seer, a mystic, a social reformer, a genius. However, in my own estimation, I am only an ordinary person, with a heart brimming over with love and compassion for all fellow human beings. All my life has been spent in the 'business' of love – sharing love all around me and inspiring people, by example, to love. I purchased this commodity – love – at an exorbitant cost and have shared it with others almost free.

— Shriram Sharma Acharya

1. The author in his daily routine of writing articles for *‘Akhand Jyoti’*
2. Mahamana Pandit Madanmohan Malviya initiating the author, a child of eight years, in *Gayatri Mantra*
3. At the age of fifteen the author had a glimpse of his *Guru* in astral form in his room of worship
4. Installation of a constantly lighted, *ghrit* lamp in the year 1926, which is still burning
5. The place of birth in Anwalkheda, where a grand monument has now been built
6. Bread prepared from barley grains, fed to a cow, picked up from the cow-dung and then cleaned, washed, dried and ground into flour and buttermilk were the only food taken by the author during the twenty-four *Gayatri Mahapurashcharans*
7. During participation in India’s struggle for freedom the author was mercilessly beaten by the Police but he did not allow the national flag to fall on the ground
8. A staunch devotee of *Gayatri Sadhana*, a devoted volunteer in the freedom struggle
9. Meeting with the Master (in astral form) in the inaccessible region of Nandanvan in the *Himalayas*
10. Left - A companion of solitude in the desolate *Himalayas*
11. Right - A snow-clad peak in the *Himalayas*
12. A solitary pilgrim in the *Himalayas*
13. The author during his intensive sadhana in the *Himalayas*
14. Gayatri Tapobhumi, Mathura
15. Akhand Jyoti Sansthan, Mathura
16. The author and his soul-mate, Mata Bhagwatidevi Sharma
17. Brahmavarchas Research Institute, Haridwar
18. *Gayatri Tirth* - Shantikunj, Haridwar
19. *Charan Paduka* – “ *Prakhar Pragya*” and “*Sajal Shraddha*” in Shantikunj
20. Symbolic Idol of *Gayatri Mata*
21. Besides insightful treatises on the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Upnishads* etc. there is hardly any facet of human knowledge which the author has left unexplored
22. Gomukh- the source of the Holi *Ganga* in deep *Himalayas*
23. Bhagirath Shila near Gangotri
24. The author in a deeply pensive mood
25. The author in a contemplative mood during *Sukshmikaran Sadhana*

Last Message

My soul's embodied sojourn on Earth is about to come to a close. Every breath of this long life-span of eighty years has been spent, in a spirit of total self-surrender to the Indwelling, All-pervading Divinity, while selflessly and singlepointedly carrying out the behests of my Divine Gurusatta, living in astral-causal sheaths in the remote Himalayas. The stupendous and herculean task of uplifting humanity into the Golden Era of Satyug (Age of Truth) will be far more swiftly and effectively accomplished by working, as a liberated soul, through the self-effectuating and all-conquering divine cosmic energies of the higher planes of consciousness, instead of somehow carrying on the work with this worn-out physical sheath. Hence the decision to cast it off.

The light of which I have been an instrument and medium will not extinguish with my withdrawal from the physical realm. I assure all my parijans that I will continue living and working with them at Shantikunj and elsewhere in my astral-causal body as a concrete presence and guide, help and inspire them in their efforts to lead humanity into the Golden Era of Truth, Light and Immortality. I will finally merge into the Blissful Luminous causal self at the end of this century, after humanity has taken decisive leap into the cosmic consciousness and attained the light of New Era of spiritual Unity, Harmony and Peace.

The bonds of spiritual kinship that bind us will continue growing deeper and stronger with the passage of time.

My soul is like a Brahma-Kamal (Lotus) in full bloom. Throughout this life I have sown numberless seeds of this lotus in aspiring souls who have turned to me. I am sure, these seeds, wherever they have fallen on fertile soil, will sprout and grow up into full-bloomed Brahma-Kamals themselves and become the torch-bearers for the spread of Divine Light on Earth.

My blessings, love and prayer-filled wishes to all my parijans. I will always be with them in their selfless and noble endeavours in this divine work.

— Shriram

Sharma Acharya

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- Way of life necessary for redemption of evil traits (sanskars) acquired in earlier lives, 94.
- Making of Acharyashri 94-95
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Brahmvarchas - The reflection (reaction) of energy of *Savita* in *s³dhak* imbibed as *ojas, tejas* and *varcas* in the physical, mental and astral bodies.

Brahmavarchas Research Institute- The scientific research laboratory on Yagyopathy and Ayurveda working at Shantikunj.
- Objective of establishment, 87.
- Research on *Yagya* and medicinal efficacy of herbal plants, 99.

Devātmā Himālaya - Uttrakhand region of Himalaya where risis now live in astral bodies.
- Representative structures in Shantikunj, 84.
- A temple of Devātmā Himālaya, 96-97.
- Living idols radiating spiritual energy, 96.

Devkanyās - Young maidens initiated, brought up and got married by Acharyashri and Mataji, 84.

Dwij - Literally meaning “ Born again”. It refers to the rebirth of a person as an infant in the field of spirituality on initiation. (A “*Dwij* is not a “*Brāhmaṇ*” by caste or birth, as is erroneously understood today)
- See *Brāhmaṇa*, 94

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Gāyatri Parivār - The global family of the mission pledged to work for *vicār krānti* by invocation of primordial energy of God through “*Gāyatri*”, basically adopting three successive steps of ‘self reformation’, ‘reformation of family’ and ‘reformation of entire society’ by virtue of the preceding step.

Tapascaryā - The process of progressive cleansing of heart and mind (*chitta*) by practising special exercises of *sādhanā* in isolation(for seeking divine assistance for a noble cause)

Upāsanā - (Literally meaning "sitting in proximity"). In parlance of spirituality it means coming closer to God-ultimately becoming one with the creator. Like fuel losing its identity on coming in contact with fire. Since God is considered as an "Ensemble of virtues", *Upāsanā* stands for expelling vices from one's thoughts, words and deeds and imbibing virtues therein. In a nutshell moral upliftment by personal endeavour and prayer.